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NARRATIVE STANCE AND AUTHORIAL INTENTIONALITY: A STUDY OF TOM JONES, THE EGOIST, AND THE GOLDEN BOWL

by

© JEANNE MARTHA PERREAULT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Narrative Stance and Authorial Intentionality: A study of Tom Jones, The Egoist, and The Golden Bowl" submitted by Jeanne Martha Perreault in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary criticism has given almost undivided attention to the formal properties of the novel, thus excluding interest in the author's aims or the reader's response. This thesis contends that, if a more holistic view of the novel is to be realized, the purposive agency of the author and the active participation of the reader must be considered.

The first chapter offers a general theoretical basis upon which such an approach may be developed. It outlines some of the misconceptions and limitations that characterize a strictly formalist perspective and suggests that the author's use of narrative voice not only provides access to his literary and moral intention but also shapes the reader's experience of the text.

The subsequent chapters (readings of Tom Jones, The Egoist, and The Golden Bowl) demonstrate the flexibility of this approach. Though each novel is discussed with a different emphasis, focus upon the use and effect of narrative voice is sustained. Fielding's narrator is aggressive and volatile, commanding the reader's attention in explicit ways while working upon his expectations and predilections most subtly; Meredith's narrative voice is a

composite of genres, each providing a facet of the author's vision while the movement between them undermines egocentric habits of mind; James's highly stylized narrative voice adheres to the characters' consciousness while maintaining its own distinctive tone and thus establishes a high tension between the process and effect of representation.

The thesis as a whole attempts to show that the complex use of narrative voice is integral to the embodiment of authorial intention and to illustrate the enrichment possible when author and reader are considered to be part of the narrative process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A form which can evoke such heterogeneous descriptions as "loose baggy monsters"[1] and a painting on "a little bit . . . of Ivory"[2] must be recognized as problematical. The novel resists formulaic definition because of the range of capacities it has shown, yet critics continue to grapple with definition hoping to discover a way of making the genre appear orderly and decorous. The difficulty of this task is exacerbated by the scattered origins of the novel which make the form itself indeterminate. Ultimately deriving from the narrative traditions of myth, epic, and history, and from its subsequent confluence with romance, autobiography, and confession[3] the form is inherently mixed and thus defeats homogeneous elucidation.

Critical approaches, such as those which fix a particular novel in its place in literary history,[4] or which try to discover the whole through an examination of its parts,[5] or which pin it to a representation of socio-economic reality,[6] have limited themselves to a single criterion of exploration, and while some of the information they provide is illuminating, they inhibit a holistic view of the novel. No single approach accommodates the novel's

multifarious reality, and in order to overcome the tendency to evolve an inflexible attachment to a single perspective, a critical approach must be self-consciously inclusive. The various dualities that must be incorporated in such an approach are not merely troublesome complications of the novel's character, but are essential to its ongoing fascination. By dualities I mean the polarities that the novel holds in tension: its existence as historical artifact and as immediate experience, its relationship to external reality and the reality of its own unique world, its evocation of emotional response and its resistance to sentimentality. But even this phrasing of the dualities generates distortion, for it implies that the novel can be grasped as a uniform perceptual experience independent of the processes by which the reader engages with the author through the mediation of the text. In this process the activities of creation and apprehension meet in what T. S. Eliot calls "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings."[7]

The language of fiction embodies a dialectical relationship between the representation of a familiar world of people, places, things and ideas and the creation of a new world in which similarity to everyday experience is transcended by the numinous power of the precise organization of words. The choice and ordering of these words belongs to the author. The reader's response to them involves him in the habit of mind revealed by the

author. The way the words are put together is an indication of the kind of involvement the writer has with the world he creates, and works as a paradigm for the kind and quality of involvement that the reader is invited to share. But the reader's sense of participation with the writer also obliges him to a critical awareness of this involvement. The reader must surrender his own perspective and take on the vision demanded by authorial control, and, alternately he must detach himself from the work, observing the process in which he is engaged. These complementary obligations paradoxically free the reader to exercise a wide range of affective responses, while his awareness of those responses (which involves him in considerations of literary and social context, rhetoric and style, the development of image patterns and so forth) allows him to see the text at work shaping his experience.

The reader who maintains this double vision achieves a flexible synthesis that registers the passional subjective and rational objective modes of consciousness (and the subtle gradations and interactions between the two) and approximates the sensibility demonstrated by the author. The intelligence of the writer is revealed in the play of his mind between the intuitive and formal modes of thought manifested in the text. As the reader engages in mental processes congruent with those of the writer, communication is established. The aims of communication, aesthetic, imaginative, and moral, may be attained as the reader learns

to attend to the way language draws him into the life of the novel, and the ways the author uses it to keep him detached from it. The reader's sensitivity to this fluctuation alerts him not only to the possibility but also to the necessity of inferring authorial intentionality.

The "author" with whom we are concerned is not only the historical-biological individual whose mind, as Wimsatt says, "we cannot look into."[8] The limits of Wimsatt's definition of intention as "design or plan in the author's mind" need not, however, neutralize that word for us. We may consider intention as that which is revealed or realized in the work and not simply as an idea trapped in the author's conscious or unconscious mind. Paul de Man, in Blindness and Insight, criticises Wimsatt's idea of intentionality on the grounds that the distinction between a "natural object" whose meaning is strictly ontological (that is, its meaning is in the apprehension of its sensory attributes) and an intentional object which "requires a reference to a specific act as constitutive of its mode of being"[9] has been blurred, and that Wimsatt's hypostatizing which "changes a literary act into a literary object by suppression of its intentional character" indicates a confusion in the nature of intentionality. De Man suggests that "the concept of intentionality is neither physical nor psychological in its nature, but structural" and that "The structural intentionality determines the relationship between the components of the resulting object in all its

parts, but the relationship of the particular state of mind of the person engaged in the act of structurization to the structured object is altogether contingent."[10]

Wimsatt's objectivity is grounded in denial. His approach, by the exclusion of epistemic activity on the part of reader or writer, reduces both the literature itself and the reader. Art is important to us, not merely because of its existential presence, but because it is the manifestation of human thought and feeling, and represents the possibility of a shared reality. De Man's emphasis on the access to intentionality that "the relationship between the components" provides is inclusive in that it touches upon each aspect of the critical experience: inference of authorial intention, detailed examination of the text, and the reader's engagement in communication rather than in "suppression of its [the novel's] intentional character."

Biographical connections (which may be irrelevant or inaccessible) are not the basis of inferred intentionality. The stigma these associations have lent to questions of the possibility of discovering, or even the relevance of, authorial intentions, is overcome by the reader's recognition that intentionality is an organizing principle that informs every facet of the novel. Moreover, the reader's attention to his own responses as well as to the interrelation of the novel's parts is an important aspect of that recognition. Ralph Rader points out that the mind "actively seeks to impose meaning and eliminate ambiguity in its encounters

with the world"[11] and that in response to a piece of language the mind is "pervasively dependent on interpretative assumptions about agentality and intention."[12] The reader is obligated to refine his awareness of the "interpretive assumptions" he makes, for, as language is worked in more complex ways than common referential usage allows, the mind's desire to order its experience should be based, not on predetermined constructs, but on immediate and detailed apprehension of the cues the writer gives us. Every reader asks himself, either implicitly or explicitly, "what must the writer mean to have used these words in this context?" Both comprehension and judgement are based upon our (often covert) inferences of the author's intentions. De Man and Rader are important because they provide a basis for the discussion which must take place if an approach to the novel which includes the writer and the reader is to evolve.

The author's use of point of view and narrative stance helps us to answer the question "How does it mean?"[13] Point of view is a way of seeing, an approach to experience, that in the novel is an important aspect of the experience itself. For the novelist, say Scholes and Kellogg, point of view is an aesthetic decision which "controls and shapes material," while for the reader "point of view is not an aesthetic matter but a mode of perception. The point of view in a given novel controls the reader's impression of everything else."[14] Scholes and Kellogg's position, that the author's "choice of point of view and the mode of

language appropriate to it will influence his presentation of character, incident and every other thing represented"[15] provides grounds for treating the author's choice of point of view as a more far-reaching decision than one of (mere) aesthetic sensibility. Just as the reader's apprehension of point of view is not limited to aesthetic considerations, so must the author's approach to it be granted a broader range of significance. The author's choice of point of view reveals the "order of knowing" by which the perceptual, moral and intellectual habits of mind of the author are made manifest. The identity of the "knower,"[16] or (implied) author, is accessible not only through what he knows, but how he knows, how he conceives and expresses his knowledge; and his identity is important to us because it allows us to interpret what he is telling us.

The complexity of coming to know the author is bound up with the narrative stances he uses. The gap between the author's point of view and narrative stances taken offers a perceptible disparity of understanding in which "irony, either actual or potential" is present.[17] The further discrepancy of understanding, which lies between the reader, the narrator and the author gives support to Scholes and Kellogg's assertion that control of irony "is a principle function of point of view."[18] The reader's attempts to narrow the gap of understanding between himself and the author (and in so doing to overcome the irony of disadvantaged ignorance) involve him in a self-conscious

process in which the work must be scrutinized for cues that signal the distinction between the points of view of the characters, the narrative voice[s], and the author.

The attention the reader pays to his own cognitive and emotive experience as he reads implicates him in the relativity or limitation of point of view and allows him to engage experientially in a consciousness of the dialectical relationship between art and life. That is to say, the realization of irony--of disparate orders of knowing and being--requires the reader to be aware of his own response, which in turn reflects for him a sensitivity to the movements of the authorial mind and allows him to stand in more or less direct co-existent relation to it.

As attention to point of view leads us to a discussion of reader's response, Wayne Booth's work in this area may prove to be of use.

Booth categorizes and analyses two dimensions of reader's response, both of which lend themselves to formalist criticism. The first includes an intellectual or cognitive interest in which (a) the completed patterns of theme, image and symbol satisfy the reader's curiosity and allow him to formulate some sense of the meaning of the characters' lives, and (b) an aesthetic, impersonal interest through which the conventional expectations of cause and effect, artistic integrity, and the "promised qualities" of the particular text (stylistic brilliance, irony, etc.) are called into play.[19] The reader's knowledge of literature is

clearly a major consideration in his cognitive apprehension of the work. The impersonal measuring, weighing and comparing that engages with the particular work as a unit has its basis in a general pattern of literary convention and expectation. The second dimension of reader response which Booth calls "Practical interests" is primarily emotive. Our concern for the characters, their moral and emotional development, dominates this area of interest and evokes hope, fear, and pity for them. Booth suggests that emotional interest may be "the core of our experience" of literature.

These crude categorizations may help us to recognize different broad areas of response, but the more subtle and provocative ideas that Booth puts forth come through his analysis of the satisfactions available via the necessity of inferring the author's position. The quality of relationship between the reader and the author depends on the reader's ability to "collaborate" with the author. Booth's insistence that the sharing of beliefs is the criterion for measuring collaboration, however, does not take into account the question of how the reader develops a way of seeing that is congruent with that of the author or of how the reader is induced to make alterations in belief or attitude. The reader's openness to the intentions that shape the work indicates his acceptance of the responsibility of raising himself to "the height required to experience the imaginative and emotional complexities"[20] of the work, but Booth does not really examine the process that inspires

this elevation.

Despite these incompletenesses in his argument, Booth's well-known discussion of the relations of reader and author to narrative stance offers further support to the possibility and significance of discovering intentionality. In Booth's view the reader is able to share both the narrator's position and the author's aesthetic, emotional and moral perspective (which includes, of course, his relation to the narrator). This vantage point allows the reader to see any divergence of the author from the narrator and, in consequence, to ally himself with the author and distance himself from the narrator. Though Booth does not discuss this aspect of the issue, the double vision it demands is part of the "imaginative and emotional complexity" that we enjoy in the novel, and is grounded in the inference of authorial intention. Booth's division of "intellectual" and "practical" responses may be resynthesized in our development of an inclusive approach as recognition of authorial presence obliges us to attend to authorial control.

The response categories also help to reveal the limitations of various literary approaches. Wimsatt's reaction against the use of emotional response as a tool for understanding, for example, and his insistence on an objective standard that isolates the work from its affective impact on the reader, adheres to the intellectual and conventional satisfactions that literature offers and denies

the validity of the kind of knowledge gained from the "transportation of self into the object."[21] From this position Wimsatt ignores the potential of a flexible response in which the reader may surrender some detachment and enter into the novel's reality for a time.

De Man describes "interpretation" with this surrender in mind: "Interpretation of an intentional act or object always implies an understanding of the intent . . . no new set of relationships are added to an existing reality, but relationships that were already there are being disclosed, not only in themselves (like events of nature) but as they exist for us."[22] The reader's exploration of how the novel "exists for us" is part of his attempt to understand the process by which he oscillates between absorption in and independence from the life of the novel and engages him in an effort to understand what the author is sharing with him.

The attempts of formalist critics to defeat the significance of the writer's intention and reader's response, and to attend strictly to the formal properties of the work have led them to a kind of grid through which they attempt to approach the work "objectively." For Ian Watt the idea of "formal realism" has become a filter by which the value of the work is caught in the referential of pointed correspondence between the text and the reality of the external world. Narrative language in Watt's view can only point to an existing individual and particular

experience contained within the formal properties of character, setting and plot. When Watt states the "the novel's realism . . . resides in not the kind of life it presents but the way it presents it"[23] he is not, as it appears, granting the novel its own reality, of which the teller's voice is a crucial and formative part, but is referring to the embodiment of detail and the passage of time that narrative art may achieve. Watt's formalism denies the dialectical relationship between art and life that resists simple definition. The novel as "illusion of reality" implicates the novelist in the activity of generating the deception that there is a single reality that may be encapsulated, as if "truth were here or there, as if life could be localized, as if revelation were a property."[24]

The effort of the critic-reader to approach the novel in a non-reductive way (one that allows "truth," "life," "revelation" the unfixed and unlocalized light by which we recognize them) involves him in the communicative impulse of the literature and in so doing implicates him in the affirmation of the human community.

The body of this thesis explores various aspects of the questions raised above. With close attention to the relationship between author, text and reader, and consideration of the methods by which the reader may realize the potential inherent in an inclusive approach, the thesis looks at Fielding's use of narrative stance in Tom Jones,[25]

Meredith's play with generic diversity in The Egoist,[26] and James's balance of affective means and literary impulse in The Golden Bowl.[27]

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE STANCE IN TOM JONES

> . . . for thou art highly mistaken if thou dost imagine that we intended, when we begun this great work, to leave thy sagacity nothing to do, or that, without sometimes exercising this talent, thou wilt be able to travel through our pages with any pleasure or profit to thyself. (X.9)

Fielding insists upon the exercise of a "talent" that Tom Jones does much to develop. The reader, as he contends with a narrative voice that shifts, varies, and contradicts itself, finds himself facing the problems of intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and moral concern with which the narrator is grappling. Fielding brings into play an elaborate synthesis of these concerns through his treatment of narrative stance, and the reader's relationship to the narrator allows him to realize the processes which permit the synthesis to take place. The narrator in this process is, on the one hand, a highly stylized literary device used to achieve formal latitude, and on the other, is an idiosyncratic individual bound by his consciousness of his own human limitations. The one invites a detached view, while the other requires the reader to yield to the narrator's perspective. Furthermore,

Fielding obliges the reader to be aware of the converging and diverging of these two facets of his storyteller. As the reader attempts to follow the movements of Fielding's narrator he must accept this dual functioning of narrative stance, and in so doing reconcile himself to an approach to art and to reality that parallels the attitude embodied in the narrative voice.

Within these large categories of narrative function the narrator takes on stances that present various facets of "human nature." Each stance represents an aspect of human limitation; the movement from one to another reveals the inadequacy of a single perspective in facing the complexity of experience. The position of the storyteller in relation to himself, the work at hand and the reader is both tentative and mutable. As it oscillates, cautious and redefining, the narrative voice mediates between the multitude of possibilities inherent in reality and the reader's reliance on a single perspective. Habits of mind that lend themselves to a linear, certain, and self-assured approach to reality are undermined by the narrator's exposure of the folly of schematized expectation. The narrator's emphatic lack of omniscience demonstrates the limitation of an individual viewpoint, while his superior knowledge approximates wise inclusiveness; his dual nature allows the narrator to function, self-consciously, as a paradigm of perception. Fielding presents this paradoxical realization and transcendence of limitation as a kind of

double vision which involves the ability to respond both emotionally and rationally to the world, yet to stand apart from those responses, recognize the boundaries of of any individual view, and thus be both attached to and detached from a particular perspective.

Fielding incorporates double vision as a tension between the mood or emotional value of the narrator's comments, and the tone which alerts the reader to Fielding's presence behind the narrative voice. The reader is invited to measure his affective response to the narrator's feelings against the analytic response evoked by the tone. Though distinction between tone and mood obviously lends itself to the discovery of ironic treatment of the narrator, no assumption that this treatment is consistently present may be made. The narrator himself is more self-conscious and has a stronger grasp of the necessity for double vision than a uniformly ironic treatment would provide. Furthermore, the shifts in narrative stance are often calculated to focus the reader's attention on an ironic view of his own responses as Fielding shifts the emphasis from the narrator as a model of correct attitude to the narrator as a representative of a literary or moral absurdity. The shifts occur more swiftly and subtly than the uninitiated reader expects, and attachment to a single mode of response leaves him allied to a perspective that is no longer at work.

The integration that double vision reveals is not

simply the product of rhetorical cleverness designed to perplex the reader or embarass him. Fielding's moral vision posits the necessity of a dual consciousness that must be an integral part of humanity's approach to itself. The tension between justice and mercy, for example, plays a large role in Tom Jones. The responsibility for judgment is a moral and social obligation yet Fielding demonstrates that an equal responsibility lies in maintaining a tentative position on the rightness of that judgment. Absolute certainty precludes the necessity for, or the possibility of, mercy, which by its nature acknowledges the inability of a part to know, and thus encompass, the whole. The apparent contradiction may be embraced only through the exercise of dual capacities of reason and emotion, attachment and detachment.

Fielding's use of narrative voice, the experiences and perspective of the characters, the generic complications and the role of the reader are manifestations of difficult and intricate circuits that engage the reader in a movement towards holistic understanding. This understanding is achieved, not through the blurring of contradictions, but through the expansion of moral and intellectual apprehension that can contain ambiguity by accepting it.

The narrator's role in the inculcation and representation of a correct approach to experience is found in the flexibility of (and the tension between) the stances he takes as he establishes a social and literary identity.

The reader's response to this "identity" must be complex in order to accommodate the narrator's inconsistencies. The reader is obliged to establish a relationship that includes the narrator's various stances towards himself as author, historian, human being, and the multitude of personae that demonstrate his various attitudes. This relationship also involves the reader's attention to the definitions, categories, and rules of authorship that the narrator uses as he oscillates between his claim for autonomy and his exploitation of the authority and forms of literary tradition. Furthermore the reader must take into account the shifting stances towards the tale as the narrator claims both knowledge and ignorance of the characters and events that make up the action. The basis of the relationship is, however, the narrator's concern with the nature and habits of mind of the reader himself, and the reader's response to the shifting attitudes towards himself constitute a crucial aspect of his appreciation of the narrator's role. Who the narrator is, the functions he has, and the reader's response to him are further complicated by the integrity he ultimately achieves.

The introductory chapters of each book of Tom Jones articulate the way of being in relation to life and art that the work as a whole actively demonstrates; however they are not merely explanatory statements. Their subject matter is largely the requirements of art--for both participants in the literary process, the writer and the

reader--but though the tale is often suspended, Fielding's rhetorical methods are still active. That is to say, the most overt statements about himself that the narrator provides must be approached with the same recognition of doubleness and attentiveness to stance that the rest of the book requires.

Fielding's desire to make the identity and role of both author and reader an issue is apparent from the first words of the novel: "An author ought to consider himself, not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money" (I.1). His motive for this decision is, he claims, consideration for the reader who should not be placed in the position of having to consume that which may be "very indifferent, and utterly disagreeable." The narrator's humility and concern for the reader glides into a description of those who frequent "public ordinaries." They are self-willed and fussy, "insist on gratifying their palates, however nice and even whimsical these may prove," aggressive and abusive, "if everything is not agreeable to their taste will . . . censure, abuse . . . d--n their dinner without controul." The narrator's sympathy for the hapless reader, and his chastisement of self-gratifying authors focuses the reader's attention on the potential of each position. If the reader relaxes into the first image the narrator creates for him, he is confronted by the

implications of the second. As the narrator's perspective changes, the reader who identifies with the long-suffering victim must see himself as the unpleasant boor. The narrator prevents us from settling into a reaction to this calumny by addressing us directly as "sensible" and "learned" in the degree to which we respond favourably to his offering. The humble and honest innkeeper (markedly dissimilar to the greedy dishonest innkeepers who populate the rest of the novel) upon whom the narrator models himself is transformed into the most cunning of chefs as the narrator suggests another dimension of his identity. Following the "highest principles of the best cook" the narrator reveals that his ambition is to render us "desirous to read on forever."

The narrative shifts in this first chapter of Tom Jones present the reader with a difficult task. We are inspired to trust this narrator by virtue of the open statement of his method and desires; moreover, the external frame of reference that Fielding presumes his audience to hold (i.e., some experience with the way and manners of innkeepers) makes the narrator's protestations of humility and consideration transparent and engenders a kind of inside view of narrator as playful, but not too deceptively so. On the other hand, we have been alerted to the dangers of a simple identification with any one role the narrator assigns to us, for it may, as he shifts perspective, provide a most unflattering reflection. The

reader is already required to exercise his capacity for an inclusive vision.

Those who do not attempt to achieve a multiple perspective are treated harshly by the narrator. The critic is one example (X.1). The narrator addresses himself directly to his reader promising "a few wholesome admonitions." In the course of warning us not to condemn hastily any one part of his book because we do not know the whole, his outrage against critics takes on comic proportions. The reader becomes "a little reptile of a critic," the narrator a god defending "a great creation of our own." His ire calms as he urges "my good reptile" to exercise "true discernment," and finally the critic/reader becomes "my worthy friend (for, perhaps thy heart may be better than thy head)," who is encouraged to remember that human limitations and imperfections are simply aspects of nature. The passage ends with a cheery "And now my friend . . . we will, if you please . . . ."

The narrator's words enjoin a model of perception and attitude while his own movements demonstrate that which he condemns. The narrator struggles with self-control and attempts to maintain his double vision, but the exaggerated wrath he displays reflects his own self-importance; his concern for precise discernment is attended by his fear that "<u>every</u> amorous widow on the stage would run the hazard of being condemned as a servile imitation of Dido" (emphasis my own); and his urge for acceptance of the good

and bad in man is shown in his allowing us a good heart, despite our stupidity.

The reader is called upon to use his discriminating and synthesizing abilities in order to respond appropriately to the double message he receives. By accusing us of being singleminded "critics" and simultaneously preventing access to a single perspective, the narrator helps the reader evolve a dual perspective. Without it we are left to "judge according to the sentiments of some critics, and of some Christians" which means that "no author will be saved in this world, and no man in the next"

The narrator insists that his "province is to relate facts" and he may "leave causes to persons of much higher genius" (II.4), but the relation of facts is no straightforward business as it is subject to the dictates of a high priestess: "if the historic muse hath entrusted me with any secrets, I will by no means be guilty of discovering them 'till she give me leave" (II.6). The obligations under which the narrator labours and the narrow confines that he claims are the boundaries of his province must continually be evaluated in a dual way. The obvious facetiousness of his disclaimers must be balanced with the actual necessities imposed by effective story-telling. The ironic retreat from exposing cause or motive becomes an irony upon irony, for, to the extent that the narrator is a human being his knowledge of causality is indeed limited, and Fielding maintains the reader's

awareness of circumscribed knowledge as he unfolds the multiple causes that may initiate any one effect. At the same time the service that art offers in the development of complex and self-conscious enlightenment is posited by the very listing or unfolding of layers of motives and possibilities.

As the narrator's continually shifting stances toward himself and his reader inculcate a recognition of the requirements of that relationship, the narrator attends to the education of the reader about the work itself, and how it is to be understood. He refers repeatedly to his work as a "history," but he also calls it an "heroic, historical, prosaic poem" (IV.1), and a "prosai-comic-epic" (V.1). The mixing of labels works concomitantly with his mixing of the "rules" by which he writes. "Historic truth" (III.2, VII.2), "a rule of Horace" (IV.14), "the rules of probability" (VIII.1) are all called upon, when it is useful, despite his insistence that the reader's interest is the "great rule" of his writing. Furthermore, the narrator uses these rules against each other, as when he claims adherence to Lord Shaftesbury's observation that, "nothing is more cold than the invocation of a muse by a modern" (VIII.1) after he has found it necessary to "invite a superior power to our assistance" (IV.8). These contrasts are not straightforward, of course. He addresses the muses, "Ye Muses then, whoever ye are" (IV.8); or after he has criticized "voluminous historians" for their

inclusion of every detail (II.1), he notes that, ". . . there are many little circumstances too often omitted by injudicious historians" (V.4).

This literary eclecticism functions not only to satirize the forms, rules or practices by which other writers attempt to elevate their works, but also undermines the proclivity of readers to categorize and schematize their experience of literature. The expectations with which a reader approaches an epic, or the single-minded devotion to "the opinion of Aristotle; or if not, . . . the opinion of some wise man, whose authority will be as weighty, when it is as old," are thoroughly undone. The narrator exploits literary formulae to keep us conscious of the workings of art. But the detachment from the novel that this level of appreciation requires is not allowed to overwhelm Fielding's invitation to involvement. The elaborate rhetorical stance taken in "An Invocation" (XIII.1) is an example of Fielding's skill with this dual obligation. The narrative stance mocks the classical formulaic language; the profusion of "thous" and "thees" is excessive, the imagery of "heroic lyres" and "ravished fancy" is set against "well-fed booksellers" and "quickly-convertible bank-bills." The content of the invocation itself, however, is deeply earnest: insight, self-knowledge, learning, humanity and experience are requested. The serious and caring tone shines through the histrionic affectation that the style represents. The

contrast undermines the possibility of a sentimental response to the content by overemphasizing sentiment in the rhetoric.

The narrator himself need not bear the whole weight of Fielding's efforts to portray and inculcate a paradoxical perspective. The reader is obliged to accept and transcend limitation in order to understand the characters' experiences, but the characters, too, confront that paradox. Those characters chosen by Fielding to represent that process undergo experientially that which the reader undergoes imaginatively. They meet the world with the capacity for understanding that their plans, expectations, desires may not work (because they are based on partial knowledge, because life is not logical, or systematic), and do not rail against life but accept it, enlarging themselves in the process.

The narrator has little sympathy for those who will not accept their limitations. His treatment of them is scathingly ironic. Captain Blifil, for example, after the success of his scheme to marry Miss Bridget (or rather the marriage "contracted with Mr. Allworthy's lands and tenements" [II.7]) is given to "pleasant meditations" of Allworthy's death. He "calculates," "intends," "projects" and "plans." The narrator assures us that his certainty of outliving Allworthy is logical, as is his expectation of inheriting the property. However, Blifil falls dead of an apoplexy. The narrator, quite cheerfully, suggests that

"The utmost malice of fortune, could indeed have contrived nothing so cruel, so mal-a-propos, so absolutely destructive of all his schemes" (II.4). Death is perhaps the only certainty, but rarely figures in the schemes of the single-minded.

More elaborate designs fare little better. Even those evolving from the most noble motives are subject to failure simply because of the limited knowledge an individual can bring to bear on a situation. In his efforts to educate Tom and Master Blifil, Squire Allworthy hopes that the different errors he perceives in the doctrines of Square and Twackum would balance each other: "He thought indeed that the different exuberancies of these gentlemen would correct their different imperfections; and that from both, especially with his assistance, the two lads would derive sufficient precepts of true religion and virtue" (III.5). Allworthy's honourable intentions are not enough to make his plan work and the narrator facetiously invites our inspection of its weaknesses: "If the event happened contrary to his expectations, this possibly proceeded from some fault in the plan itself; which the reader hath my leave to discover if he can" (III.5). The narrator goes on to present his own view of the possibility that the fault lay in the plan itself: "we do not pretend to introduce any infallible characters into this history; where we hope nothing will be found which hath never yet been seen in human nature" (III.5).

The expectations of the paragon, Mr. Allworthy, are subject to the large truth of nature: human beings are fallible, and their designs cannot incorporate the wholeness of truth or the variousness of human behavior. Any predilection the reader may have for shifting responsibility for success or failure onto a system is mocked in the contrast between the neat and simplistic quality of a system and the complex, changing and unknowable fullness of reality.

But Fielding is not content to present situations, or narrative commentary on the "best-laid plans" that the reader, from a secure position, may cluck over and file away in a container labled "Human Condition." Rather he uses character and narrative stance to engage the reader in an active process of raised and defeated expectation, thus undermining the epistemological certainty with which we approach the novel. It is here that the dichotomy between art and life breaks down and Fielding's moral intentions become most apparent; for, Fielding seems to be saying, if a sense of the elusiveness of truth can be caught in the words of a novel, consider how much more elusive truth must be in the mystery and complexity of life. The morality that urges us towards knowledge, understanding and love can not be anchored in a single or simple framework.

The attitude with which Fielding presents this value is not, however, moralizing. In fact, the central

mystery of the work, Tom's parentage, which is the one thing the reader does not know, and cannot know (though he is allowed, through the comic tone of the novel to know that Tom and Sophia are destined for each other, and that Blifil's villany will be revealed) is ensured by the playful manner in which Bridget Allworthy is introduced:

> This lady was now somewhat past the age of 30, an æra, at which, in the opinion of the malicious, the title of old maid may, with no impropriety, be assumed. She was of that species of women, whom you rather commend for good qualities than beauty, and who are generally called by their own sex, very good sort of women--as good a sort of woman, madam, as you would wish to know. Indeed she was so far from regretting want of beauty, that she never mention'd that perfection (if it can be called one) without contempt; and would often thank God she was not as handsome as Miss such a one, whom perhaps beauty had led into errors, which she might have otherwise avoided. Miss Bridget Allworthy (for that was the name of this lady) very rightly conceived the charms of person in a woman to be no better than snares for herself, as well as for others, and yet so discreet was she in her conduct, that her prudence was as much on the guard, as if she had had all the snares to apprehend which were ever laid for her whole sex. Indeed, I have observed (tho' it may seem unaccountable to the reader) that this guard of prudence, like the trained bands, is always readiest to go on duty where there is the least danger. It often basely and cowardly deserts those paragons for whom the men are all wishing, sighing, dying, and spreading every net in their power; and constantly attends at the heels of that higher order of women, for whom the other sex have a more distant and awful respect, and whom (from despair, I suppose, of success) they never venture to attack. (I.2)

The age, appearance and attitude of Miss Bridget are ridiculed; the category of female in which she is placed is even more mockingly treated. The narrative tone is sure and clear. Miss Bridget is fixed by our assumption that her discretion and prudence are affectations and that

few snares are set for her virtue. The narrator's playfulness consists of treating readers as individuals with peculiar perspectives of their own ("as good a sort of woman, madam, as you would wish to know") while basing the comment on a stereotypical image of the genteel lady-reader, or pretending to cater to the general naïvete of the audience. The tone of the focus on the attitudes of individual readers serves to educate us, the real readers, out of particular frameworks. The surrender of private perspectives implicates us in a contract that allows us to take part in the gentle mockery of those readers being addressed. The habitual tentativeness of the narrator is maintained when he describes Bridget's introduction to the foundling. The reader does not doubt that, despite the tentativeness, the possibilities suggested are truths because the narrator's hesitance to impute motive or to speak with absolute certaintly is already established. (The first few pages present a dozen examples of the use of "perhaps," "may seem," "I suppose"--often ironically given.) Thus when Allworthy prepares his sister with the offer of a present we are inattentive to the narrative uncertainty: "she thanked him, imagining, I suppose, it had been a gown . . . But if such was her expectation how was she disappointed, when Mrs. Wilkins . . . produced the little infant" (I.4).

The adoption of a single view of the narrator's

caution (that is, seeing the caution as an invitation to rely on the truth of the statements the narrator seems most hesitant about) is doubled back on us. In this case the narrator is actually encouraging us to doubt, but in such a way that we are unlikely to do so. Just as Mrs. Wilkins must be bewildered by Bridget's compassion and foiled by her excuse of complacency to her brother's whims, so is the reader presented with the idea that he should be concerned about her unlikely response: "Perhaps the reader may account for this behavior . . ." (I.4), "lest the virtuous reader may condemn her" (I.5).

Having alerted the reader to Bridget's uncharacteristic behavior, the narrator justifies it with an ironic view of general human motivation: "when a wife, a child, a relation, or a friend performs what we desire, with grumbling and reluctance . . . the manifest difficulty which they undergo, must greatly enhance the obligation" (I.6). The irony is transparent; our enjoyment of it, and our knowledge that Bridget is indeed likely to "enhance the obligation" owed her whenever possible, diffuses the peculiarity of the situation. The tension between typical human motivation and Bridget's private motives has been collapsed. The invitation to categorize her deeds and to fix her motives, not specifically but generally, reflects Fielding's well-founded belief that the reader is vulnerable to a confusion of the balance that must be maintained between the particular and the general.

Tom's paternity is left an open question throughout the novel, but Fielding has worked upon the reader's constricted assumptions about human capacities, and the identity of Tom's mother is not an issue. The reader recognizes the limitation of knowledge and the fallibility of vision through his own experience when he learns that the easily dismissed Miss Bridget is the key to the puzzle. Both chagrin for his own weakness, and delight with the subtlety of Fielding's construct, attend the reader's recognition of Fielding's intention at work.

Shifts in narrative stance are crucial to the reader's evolution of that consciousness. Fielding's economical structure combines character and narrative stance by making various characters story-tellers which provides yet another perspective for the reader on the working of narrative (and the nature of humanity). The Man of the Hill and Mrs. Fitzpatrick have occasion to present their histories. The enjambing of character and narrator has three dimensions of usefulness. It allows specific revelation of character; it presents both insight into the listener and a reflection of different kinds of response to narrative; and it indicates the potential abuses of narrative.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick and the Man of the Hill are both minor characters in Tom Jones. Their tales have little relevance to the plot. For these reasons character exposure is not a primary function of these autobiographical

accounts. The revelation is rather of how experience is recreated or restructured according tc intention, world view or habits of mind, and further, how it is understood or reacted to in accord with the intentions, world view or habits of mind of the audience. The workings of narrative--the interrelationship, in microcosm, of the teller, the tale and the audience--is disclosed as "our" narrator retreats into the role of recorder and other narrators take the floor.

The intentions informing Harriet Fitzpatrick's narrative are obvious. She wants to gain Sophia's sympathy, and justify her own behavior. She (unlike Sophia, who excludes reference to Tom in her account because of shyness) includes only those particulars that indicate her innocence while undermining the appearance of doing so by criticizing herself for youthful folly or minor faults like her rudeness to her country neighbours: "I must confess I had been guilty of a little rudeness this way" (XI.7). Her main line of defense is the imperfection of human nature. She generalizes her own faults, "are we so abominably selfish . . . are we not abominably vain?" and lays them at nature's doorstep--"Yet, my dear, this control is natural." Her narrative intrusions give a controlling frame to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's history and reveal her designs. Her efforts are, however, at least partially wasted on Sophia, who responds to the long tale of marital woe from her own peculiar mental set: "Indeed, Harriet, I pity you

from my soul!--But what could you expect? Why, why, would you marry an Irishman?" (XI.7). Sophia's mixed response indicates a dichotomy between affective response and causal reasoning. Mrs. Fitzpatrick's rationalizations are obviously morally evasive. Sophia's response, on the other hand, may be comically irrelevant to the content of Harriet's story, but her sensitivity and compassion undercut the silliness of her reaction.

Fielding approves of Sophia's pity for her friend, but works her irrationality in two ways. In the first place we must see Sophia as a "real" person given to the prejudices of her time--not merely as a doll-like caricature of a woman. Then we see that the story-teller's intentions are thwarted by the unexpected response she has provoked. Sophia applies a cause and effect process that undermines Harriet's portrayal of herself as innocent victim. The narrator's distortions are balanced by her audience's response, which throws an ironic light both on Harriet's efforts and on Sophia's selection of an explanation of her problems. Fielding is sensitive to the possibility of unintended reactions; the representation of Harriet and Sophia's exchange reflects for the reader the possibility of self-interested narration and unselfconscious selective perception. As the fraudulence of the one, and the foolishness of the other, are dramatized, the reader is compelled to attend to his own responses.

Partridge's egocentric reactions to the tale of the

Man of the Hill present another aspect of selective perception. Partridge ignores every aspect of the history that he cannot identify with. When the Man of the Hill mentions that his mother took the part of his brother against the school master, Partridge interrupts, "I have seen such mothers; I have been abused myself by them, and very unjustly" (VIII.2). The narrative in this instance almost disappears in the glare of the audience's self-involvement. Partridge attends only to those circumstances that have direct and emotional application to his own experience, and even then only as they present the opportunity for self-expression. The overt mockery of this approach to narrative is supported by Tom's embarrassed attempts to silence Partridge so that he can hear the history.

The interpolation of four chapters of the history of the Man of the Hill into Tom Jones is criticized by some readers as irrelevant. The course of the plot is indeed not affected by that interpolation, but its presence is justified thematically, as the portrayal of an alienated man who, seeing only one thing in the human community, isolates himself from it. The contrast between this attitude and the value Fielding places on community as a force for compassion and self-knowledge precisely because of the variousness of humanity is obvious.

The autobiographical narrative shows not only what the Man of the Hill has experienced but reveals how his

perceptions of those experiences lead him to an inevitable rejection of the world. His narrative is less manipulative than Mrs. Fitzpatrick's but no less restricted. His concern is not to make himself acceptable to the world but to justify his contempt for it. The rigidity of his perception makes his recognition of his own flaws not a basis for tolerance but a further support for his view that man is detestable. His framework of ego-centered belief in the validity of his own position causes him, for example, to say of his final dealings with his brother that his affairs were "soon settled as agreeably to my brother as to myself" and immediately to add, "His behavior in this last instance, as in all others, was selfish and ungenerous" (VIII.15). The admittedly satisfactory arrangement could not undermine his entrenched view of his brother, and he ignores the contradictions in his experience. The unselfconscious narration of the Man of the Hill demonstrates a static and uniform understanding that allows him to generalize about the nature of man. Even his travels teach him only that "the same hypocrisy, the same fraud; in short the same follies and vices, dressed in different habits" exist in every country and that "human nature is everywhere the same, everywhere the object of detestation and avoidance" (VIII.15).

Lest the reader determine that the content of this perspective is its only fault, Fielding presents the contrary view from Tom: "nothing should be esteemed as

characteristic of a species, but what is to be found among the best and most perfect individuals of that species" (VIII.15). Tom's more generous and positive belief is as single-minded as that of the Man of the Hill, and thus equally obstructive to a realistic and holistic acceptance of humanity as it is. Fielding's narrator cautions us against adhering too closely to Tom's position with a sly interjection: "Jones despaired of making a convert" (VIII. 15). The suggestion of religious enthusiasm in Tom's manner undermines the authority of his position. The narrator and the audience in this exchange are shown to be prone to the same flaw in perspective. The polarity of their stances creates a tension of absolutes from which the reader may stand back and exercise the balancing skills engaged by Fielding's narrator.

Fielding's use of other narratives within his own demonstrates the manipulation of truth that a single stance allows, and shows that adherence to a single perspective generates self-deception. Since Fielding's own narrator is presented as a human being, his narrative is vulnerable to the weaknesses found in Mrs. Fitzpatrick's or the Man of the Hill's stories. However, his awareness of the dangers of a single stance leads him to acknowledge this human limitation, and to conduct his narration from a variety of perspectives.

This concern for the correct approach to experience is given full play in Fielding's use of theatrical

reference[s]. The relation between art and life is not held by a simple polarity, but is presented as layers of connection that defy equation. In some instances "life" is represented by the characters as they respond to "art"; in others the characters are framed in stage settings, and the reader sees them as "art"; in yet other circumstances the reader is invited to watch himself respond as the events presented in life are restaged as drama. Concomitant with these variations the narrative stances shift, often as the narrator plays the role of stage director, illuminating, playfully or seriously, aspects of artistic manipulation or moral concern. Ordinary ways of thinking about art, as it is like or unlike life, as it imitates or influences life, are challenged by the direct confrontation that the theatrical references allow.

An author's ability to go "behind the scenes of this great theatre of nature" (VII.3) is the basis of his authority: life (or "nature") has elements of theatricality, but the author is able to distinguish between the staged surface of life and its core. One aspect of this gift is insight into the precise correspondences between art and life. The narrator condemns indiscriminate association of the two, and is cautious, in his analogy, that specificity be asserted: "In this instance, life most resembles the stage" (VII.3). Once precision has been established the narrator gives himself free reign. He assures us that "it is often the same person who represents the villain and

the heroe" and that "the man, as well as the player may condemn what he himself acts" (VII.1). The explicit reliance on double vision in this argument is aimed at the generation of humility and compassion. The specific correspondences between the stage and the world are presented without irony or ridicule. But to teach us the necessary discernment, Fielding returns to those methods.

Indiscriminate association of the stage and life reveals systematic and linear thought. The Master of the Puppet show is guilty of this single-mindedness as he insists that the play The Provoked Husband would deter the "inferior part of mankind" from vice by showing them "how odious it was in their superiors" (XII.5). Life, itself, defeats this equation as the serving wench, when discovered with the Merry Andrew "in a situation not very proper to be described" (XII.6) defends her behavior with the opposite application of art to life: "If I am a w---e my betters are so as well as I. What was the fine lady in the puppet show just now?" The narrator's protest that he is not "writing a system" (XII.8) is given authority by the contradictions that systematic thinking suffers in the face of reality.

The narrator's flexible perspective on the "stage" and the "world" gives him the freedom to restage the situation in which Black George steals Tom's money. The history in this case is treated as life, and reconstructed as art. The scene is encapsulated as a tableau and the

narrator stands upon the stage looking out at the audience and inviting our company. As we are made audience of the audience, our own responses to Black George's act are reflected by the playgoers. The reader is induced to detach himself from his reactions and become critically aware of the social and economic influences upon his judgment and the partial knowledge that shapes it. The reader's complacency is shaken as the narrative stance provides a mirror that reflects his own.

The narrator undermines sentimental attachment to both character and literary (and dramatic) formulae by his explanation of the staging devices authors borrow from the theatre. His introduction to Sophia, for example, teases the reader with the techniques he proposes to adopt and the response he expects: ". . . when lovers are coming forth soft music often conducts them on the stage, either to sooth the audience with all the softness of the tender passion, or to lull and prepare them for that gentle slumber in which they will most probably be composed by the ensuing scene" (IV.2). He focuses a more directly satiric eye upon the reader/critic in the chapter "Of Prologues" in which the parallels between his method of introducing each chapter and the prologue to a play are drawn. The reader and spectator are united by their "appetite for censure" which the prologue serves to whet, by their indolence which is gratified by the prologue to a play which gives them "a quarter of an hour longer to sit

at dinner," or by a book which they "have the advantage of beginning to read at the fourth or fifth page instead of the first" (XVI.1).

Fielding's assertions that his work is "not a life" nor a "system" are affirmed by these pointed references to the actors and audiences of plays. The narrative as it shifts focus makes us conscious of itself, the ways it works, and ourselves through the overt references to an art form that Fielding knew so well, and again dramatizes the significance of approach. Consciousness of the working of art is not limited to aesthetic sensibility, but involves moral development as well. Though art is not life, and should not be confused with it, the correct appreciation of the one may assist in the proper approach to the other.

The narrator's role in the above passages is primarily that of an educator. Even when he is treated ironically by Fielding the form or style of his movements is designed to inculcate a way of seeing that moves the reader progressively toward a sense of the correct relation between things. The narrator's awareness of the need to maintain an inclusive perspective has been constant, and his imagery and presentation of self have worked to convince the reader of that necessity. His omnipresent voice guides the reader, not always reliably, through the intricacies of the plot and the motivations of the characters, as well as through the literary and moral

complexities of his task. As has been noted, the narrator often presents himself as either above or below the reader but the final stances the narrator takes indicate that the imbalance is no longer necessary.

The reader becomes aware that the introductory chapters to the last three books are shorter, and that the narrator's intrusions and images are less evident. In his farewell chapter (Book XVIII, Chapter 1) the narrator describes himself as a travelling companion on an essentially equal basis with his reader. This shift in the degree of exposure of the narrator and his treatment of the reader as a peer, imply that much of the narrator's function has been internalized by the reader. That is, we have learned to see in the ways that the narrator's role was designed to show us, and thus his presence is no longer necessary.

The narrator's last reminder to us that we cannot evade recognition of our own foibles is presented in a simple ironic inversion. "I do most solemnly declare," the narrator insists, that offence was "without intention," and that we and our friends are exempt from any criticism. But he goes on to give a completely unselfconscious diatribe against his critics, and descends into exaggerated self-pity. His own humanity is posited, with its weaknesses intact, and our acceptance of him is a measure of the degree to which we have learned our lessons: no one is without limitations and to view them with compassion

and humour is the result of knowing the composition of our own humanity.

The unfolding of Fielding's grand design has been, for the reader, a process of established and defeated expectation. The narrator's role in it has been to conduct the movements that reflect for the reader his own responses in the face of a wholeness impossible for him to know. Art works in this process to make an understanding of life more accessible to us, for though we cannot comprehend the significance of much that confronts us, we can learn to approach it in a correct way. The reader is compelled towards an openness to the unexpected, and an acceptance of it as a condition of life.

Fielding's work suggests a parallel between the assumptions we are obliged to make about ourselves in relation to the book and the assumptions we make about life. We accept that we cannot know the whole truth, that we are restricted by the limitations of our own identities. However, our faith must lie in the existence of the whole, and an understanding of our own position relative to it must be attempted. That attempt involves breaking out of the single perspective with which we view ourselves and the world around us. As this effort is made humility and compassion are the inevitable result, for, as the irony of self-inflation becomes clear to us, our inclination to condemn others is diminished and our willingness to laugh at ourselves is increased.

Fielding's narrator is essential to the moral vision Tom Jones embodies. The narrator assures us of the value of overcoming encapsulated self, and helps us to enjoy the sometimes painful process of reaching toward an inclusive consciousness.

CHAPTER III

MEREDITH'S PLAY WITH GENERIC DIVERSITY IN THE EGOIST

The Egoist relies on a mixture of formal structures to convey Meredith's impression of human experience. Essay and autobiography are as integral to this novel as its conventional narrative. Analysis of Meredith's combination of these prose forms gives the reader access to dimensions of his concern that exploration of character or plot could not provide. Meredith's appreciation of the tension between private and public, individual and social realities, is reflected in the range of genres that he employs. Psychological, social and literary patterns influence each other, indeed, shape each other, and in Meredith's world the treatment of language represents the melding of one facet of reality into another. As the novel shifts modes of expression the content reveals its specific and general ramifications, while the movement itself involves both reader and writer in the process of reconciling disparate levels of experience.

The transitions from genre to genre function as a model of mental activity; one which reveals the tensions between self and society, and which manifests the habits

of mind necessary for the deflation of egocentricity. What the transitions reveal about Meredith's intention is in direct contradiction to Dorothy Van Ghent's suggestion that the style itself""figures as a kind of egoist, . . . a separated, self-willed, self-regarding element."[1] Van Ghent ignores the thematic tensions the style exemplifies: the interplay of individual and society, art and life, author and reader. These traditional concerns (within which the complexity of human motivation, the distinction between illusion and reality, the appeal and treachery of systematic thought, are given room for exploration) live in The Egoist as they do in Tom Jones, Rasselas, Emma and Middlemarch. Meredith juxtaposes intensely personal introspection with the detached irony of the essayist and so distinguishes his treatment of these themes. Moreover, as novelist Meredith combines these impulses and exposes his presentation of self to the same treatment his chararacters undergo. The style (which includes these generic shifts) works against egocentricism by deliberately preventing the single-mindedness to which a "self-regarding element" is prey.

The levels of engagement revealed in the language are not merely indicative of Meredith's perspective on himself, or the characters, or even the society. They implicate the reader as well, in that he is often the subject of the shift in narrative attention. We share Meredith's involvement in the "Book of Earth" which is the

"Book of Egoism." It is the primary text from which we all read, and in which each of us makes a mark. The reader is obliged to stand in the light the comic spirit sheds on egoists, and to recognize facets of self in Sir Willoughby and the others. But if Meredith allows us to see aspects of ourselves in the characters, he forestalls either a simple identification with or rejection of those qualities. The narrative stances demonstrate understanding, compassion, and criticism as they are grounded in consciousness of social pressure, moral judgement and reason. The reader's response to the diverse levels of emotion and reason addressed by character, fantasy, and social commentary requires that he exercise a critical awareness of self. Meredith's much discussed disappointment in his readers is not apparent in his allegiance with them in The Egoist. The novel manifests his faith in the reader's willingness to compensate for the distortion that social and individual egocentrism represents, though this involves a disturbing confrontation with social expectation and the correction of inaccurate self image.

The agent of correction, the "Comic Spirit," Meredith defines as the collusion of the individual and the community in a "shared perspective and faith with others" which provides the "high fellowship of a civilized community."[2] He states that to be unconscious of the comic spirit is to be "bull blind to the spiritual and to deny the existence of a mind of man where minds of men are in

working conjunction."[3] Meredith's belief in the possibility of shared perception inspires the demands his prose makes on the reader. Comedy has its origins in an "assemblage of minds"[4] embodying the dual vision of an "eye looking outward and an eye looking inward."[5] Meredith's style, as it incorporates the operations of the Comic Spirit, induces the reader to sustain both inward and outward vision.

"Life," Meredith says, "is not a comedy, but something strangely mixed,"[6] and as The Egoist lives, it too is "strangely mixed." In it realism, the fiction that life is caught in external appearances, and romance, the impulse to shape reality to fit a predetermined pattern, are revealed to be self-indulgent formulae that humanity uses to evade confrontation with "the actual world."[7] With the variegation of genres Meredith evokes the "actual world" to the extent that he undermines the reader's reliance on formulaic expectation and allows the enjoyment of the comic to stand beside the apprehension of pity, fear and dread.

The subversion of psychological and literary prototypes effected by the shifting narrative stances is, Judith Wilt asserts, a "deliberate effort to suggest, demonstrate, insist upon the fantastic energy and effort, complex rhythms of focus and diffusion in the motion of mind."[8] The novel, then, as it reproduces "the movement of his own mind among the options, fears, and intuitions

his characters experience"[9] allows Meredith to venture into that reflective mode without his style becoming convoluted. Just as the "real world" intrudes on Willoughby's egocentricism, so does Meredith's essayistic stance posit a rational social sensibility against which the reader measures the individual character's experience. Both reader and writer are involved in an exploration of how the mind receives and responds to inward and outward pressures. The narrative movements approximate the mind's activity in this exploration, and, while Meredith is always conscious of the potential for absurdity in humanity's posturing, his sense of the anguish that pressure may inflict is revealed in the volatility of his style.

Merethid's insight into the historical and evolutionary dynamics that encourage sentimentality and conventionality[10] and inhibit emotion and reason is not only the product of his inward eye examining his own experience. He understands the perpetuation of the images of self and others with which men and women trap themselves as his outward eye records and analyses social reality.

"Reality," then, must be understood as the confluence of individual consciousness and communal context. Meredith's novel integrates the two and thus parallels our experience of reality. The multiplicity of narrative voices in The Egoist suggests to J. Hillis Miller the play of imagination and reality, which exposes "the imaginary

quality of reality."[11] That is, "reality" is a construct that acquires meaning through intersubjective agreement; it is not absolute, but relative, and derives from the reciprocal perceptions of self and others. The interplay of genres thus demonstrates both the various levels of reality (including that of internal guiding fictions) and the "motions of mind" in the process of balancing emotional, social and aesthetic values. The reader's involvement in this "strange mixture" offers him "shared perspective and faith with others," which is not only a corrective, but a consoling experience.

The reader's proper involvement is achieved through the changing modes of expression that characterize The Egoist. The narrator's attention to a particular character, event or situation (i.e., the "novelist's" mode) gives way to a general commentary on social interactions and influences. This "outward eye" is the auxilliary of the "inward eye" marked by references to "we," "us," and "our" which indicate introspection and the move from the modes of essay to autobiography. The autobiographical passages are deliberately urgent and immediate indicating both the accessibility of Meredith's emotional intensity, and the effort to engage his reader in a recognition of common experience. In other words, Meredith's autobiography may be seen as the biography of civilized people, and his various narrative methods provide different dimensions of the life we share. Within each dimension reason and passion

are in conflict; where reason is the loser, the comic and tragic possibilities are in delicate balance. Meredith maintains the balance by evoking an ironic view on the one hand while requiring affective engagement on the other. Detachment yields to involvement as the violence of the imagery and the explicit sameness of all emotional intensity hold sway. The autobiographical mode allows Sir Willoughby's excessive, even pathological, disturbances to have the power to move us because we recognize ourselves in him. But the curving lip of comedy is always nearby, and Meredith's shifting stance activates the deflationary potential of reason.

The scope offered by a single narrative stance is unsatisfactory to Meredith not only because of the tensions he wishes to hold in contraposition but also because of the expansion and contraction of focus he requires. Meredith states that "Art is the specific" (p. 3), but a peculiarly encompassing specific that "condenses whole chapters of the Book [of Egoism] in a sentence, volumes in a character"(p. 3). His interest includes the history and nature of civilized society and his characters are representatives of their milieu, while they are, at the same time, individuals. Meredith's condensation self-consciously explores the connection between individual and type. The narrator's task is to engage the reader in self-discovery as we recognize ourselves in both the illusion of uniqueness the characters embrace, and the

distillation of communal values in the person of a single character. As the narrator offers us the particular that evolves from the general, so too he shows us the general contained in the particular.

With this movement, Meredith tells us, the whole realm of human experience may be presented in "digestible" form (p. 2). But the reader is prevented from taking this statement literally. The attempt to contain the individual by designation of type is satirized by Meredith's treatment of Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson's clever phrasings. The lady is famous for her ability to encapsulate people. She sees them as static and public entities, and her captions are designed to make the essence of the individual available to the public eye. She confines Laetitia to perpetual girlhood fixed with "a romantic tale on her eyelashes" (p. 11). The description is accurate, but one dimensional--it does not allow for the "hard detective eye" (p. 618) that Laetitia develops through her private suffering. But if Mrs. Mountstuart's designations are accurate, even for a moment, the social response to them reveals the limitations of substantial authority they offer.

Mrs. Mountstuart's simple solution to character acts as a spring-board for Meredith's comic description of the social world, and provides opportunity for an exploration of the historical and romantic sources touched by her phrasing. This phrasing is especially significant

when her incisive comment cuts through the general buzz of admiration surrounding Willoughby at his coming of age party: "And, says Mrs. Mountstuart, while grand phrases were mouthing round him: '<u>You see he has a leg</u>'" (p. 11). The narrator amplifies the significance of Mrs. Mountstuart's "word," first by describing the impact it has on the people at the party: "That you saw of course. But after she had spoken you saw much more" (p. 11). The reader is part of the general audience excited by the "weighty truthfulness" (p. 12) of the comment, but Meredith, here, is largely describing (in the narrative mode) the particular responses of the characters. His satiric view of the impression it makes on them is extended into his analysis of the socio-historic sources of their reactions. That the characters are profoundly touched is the mark that "the society has reached a high refinement."[12] The narrator dismisses as "prosaic" further mention of particular responses and as the language becomes lyrical, his address is archaic, general, and inclusive. "Dwell for a short space on Mrs. Mountstuart's word; and whither, into what fair region, and with how decorously voluptuous a sensation, do not we fly, who have, through mournful veneration of the martyr Charles, a coy attachment to the Court of his Merrie Son, where the leg was ribanded with love knots and reigned" (p. 12). The archaic and poetic language is a mockery of the "attachment" to the golden age of which "we" dream. The wish for a return to a time of "grace

incarnate," "every gesture dulcet" (pp. 2-3) is the "dream in the English country" (p. 13).

The shift from a narrative account of the characters to an ironic essay on the romantic impulses of English men and women works in various ways. It deflates the reverbations a single image strikes in the audience, yet uses those reverbations to expose the longings held in common by the society. It reveals the adolescent self-deception of those moved by reference to "a leg" ("Oh! it was a naughty Court. Yet we have dreamed of it as the period when an English cavalier was grace incarnate" [p. 12].) The sly sexual implications become undeniable as the "burning leg" is personified: "the leg that smiles, that winks, . . . twinkles midway between imperiousness and seductiveness, audacity and discretion" (p. 13). The narrative stances suggest that we all have been seduced by the fantasy of the romantic past, and the comic effect of his heighted account of its impact on us sustains our detachment while it includes us in the common dream.

The comic extension of the image and the social commentary it evokes prepare the reader to appreciate the embodiment of the "little prince" in Willoughby. Again the particular and the general are reflections of each other. Our responses to the one must take into account the influence of the other. The ironic presentation of the "manly as well as useful race of little princes" who "do the public service of heading the chase of the fox"

(p. 15) is sustained as Willoughby is compared with them: "and Willoughby was as manly as any" (p. 15). But our amusement at Willoughby's expense is modified by the narrator's explanation of the demands made upon him: "he had to continue tripping, dancing, exactly balancing himself, head to right, head to left, addressing his idolaters in phrases of perfect choiceness" (p. 15). Both as an individual and as a representative, Willoughby, bound to a marionette existence, elicits not contempt, but pity; and as the narrator turns his eye upon the reader ("he is able to maintain his posture where you would be tottering" [p. 16]) we must admit a certain admiration for "the little prince." The narrative here moves from conventional exploration of character, to ironic essay, to personal encounter with the reader. As the modes shift so does the reader's response. The reader moves with the narrator from the task of detached analysis to a position of self-conscious involvement as he is obliged to compare himself, unfavourably, with Willoughby.

Our involvement, both as reader and as participant in the social milieu of the novel (we remember that at the end of the party the "ladies were weeded of <u>us</u>" [p. 16, my emphasis]), is the result of a complex and inconsistent association with the narrative voice. The narrator's consciousness of his role and the converging and diverging of his alliance with the reader obligate the reader to become aware of the variousness of his own role, and require

him to extend his own emotional and intellectual flexibility.

The narrator's literary technique is not the work of a single cohesive identity. The generic shifts break the illusion of a uniform "self" and reflect Meredith's critical awareness of the difficulty of identity. "Self" may be many things as both the content and style of Meredith's portrayal of jealousy shows. As the narrative shifts occur Meredith exposes his own emotional complexity. The cool detachment of analysis is juxtaposed with the intensity of introspection and self-disclosure.

The narrative perspective varies, and, as it does, different modes appear. The narrator reflects Willoughby's response to the initial pangs of jealousy: "Luckless fellows might be victims of the disease; he was not" (p. 274). Willoughby has valued himself as being "above the humiliating visitation" (p. 274) but the narrator sees positive implications in Willoughby's jealousy. Direct contact with the character lapses as the narrator muses on the possibility of Willoughby being what he thinks he is: "If that had been the case, we should not have needed to trouble ourselves much about him" (p. 274). The narrator reveals not an ironic distance from the character (though Willoughby's self-deception places him in an ironic light) but a personal response to him. Willoughby "desired Clara Middleton manfully enough" (p. 274) to be jealous of her--and the narrator approves of the passionate response.

Meredith's frequent discomfort with direct

assertion of feeling is transparent in this passage:

> But he desired Clara Middleton manfully enough at an intimation of rivalry to be jealous; in a minute the foreign devil had him, he was flame: flaming verdigris, one might almost dare to say, for an exact illustration; such was actually the colour; but accept it as unsaid. (pp. 274-75)

The narrator's personal perspective allows him to evaluate Willoughby's emotion while the shift to Willoughby's perspective portrays his own experience of it. The feeling described ("he was flame"), the narrator retreats into comic excess. The lurid image is posited, but with a peculiar personal edge. The reflections are multiple: Willoughby really is "flaming verdigris," but the narrator is playfully reluctant to extend himself to the degree "exact illustration" requires. His self-effacement emphasizes the sensational image and draws attention to the narrator's perspective on both Willoughby's and his own difficulties. These reverberations ridicule Willoughby's intensity, but at the same time they distract for the moment the reader from the glimpse of empathy the narrator has shown. In addition to providing a "cover" for emotion the narrator has revealed, the comic digression restores the movement between involvement and detachment that the reader must maintain.

The perspective shifts again as the narrator considers the "poets'" imagistic rendering of jealousy: it is "Love's bed of burning marl" "[it is] to adore the bitter creature trebly and with treble power to clutch her

by the windpipe" (p. 275); then in a direct assertion that rings with the authority of personal experience he says "it is to be cheated, derided, shamed, and abject and supplicating, and consciously demoniacal in treacherousness, and victoriously self-justified in revenge" (p. 275). The ornate violence of the poets' description contrasts with the narrator's plain declaration. The narrative tone in the latter is without irony as even poetic imagery allows a gap between feeling and expression. The narrative mode then becomes social commentary--"And still there is no change in what men feel, though in what they do the modern may be more judicious" (p. 275). This sustains the attention commanded by the emotion of the preceeding paragraph while restoring ironic distance. Even the irony is mixed, for the distillation of passion into "judicious" conduct suggests a sinister power and cautions us not to take the matter of primitive emotion lightly.

The general abstraction of social comment is refocused in the congruity between "our egoism" and "the Egoist." Meredith's psychological acuity and his narrative control hold the reader, himself and the character in high tension. We share Willoughby's impulse of jealous revenge and, because his egoism is representative of us all, his response differs from our own in degree rather than in substance: ". . . the fieriest trial of our egoism, worked in the Egoist to produce division of himself from himself, a concentration of his thoughts upon another object,

still himself, but in another breast, which had to be looked at and into for the discovery of him. By the gaping jaw-chasm of his greed we may gather comprehension of his insatiate force of jealousy" (p. 275). The movement from "our" perspective which allows analysis to Willoughby's single-minded reaction is again abrupt: "Let her go? Not though he were to become a mark of public scorn in strangling her with the yoke!" (p. 275). Greed and jealousy are congruent. Willoughby has both to an extreme and we hear his voice with the image of a "jaw-chasm" devourer behind it. The narrator's comic observation--"His concentration was marvelous" (p. 275)--prevents us from being consumed by Willoughby's intensity. The kind of scientific wonder in the narrator's tone interrupts our involvement in both Willoughby's thoughts and our introspection and provides the distance needed for a view of the situation that shows its absurd as well as its painful aspects.

The changes in the narrative mode emerge as the key to Meredith's movement of mind. The passage on jealousy just analyzed conveys the general condition of man and the particular psychological state of the character; it appeals to an involvement that we cannot evade ("our egoism") and presents it as an abstraction ("the Egoist") that allows us to see its folly; it engenders both sympathy and disdain for the character who embodies that abstraction and invites a prudent detachment from him. The tenor of

Meredith's narrative voice changes with these movements as he expresses violent emotion while struggling to maintain a correct approach to it. Identity is thus portrayed as the convergence of inner and outer forces and is revealed in the movement from the one to another. Meredith treats Willoughby as ironically and tenderly as he treats himself and the reader, undermining excessive involvement with self while acknowledging the ferocity of jealousy.

Meredith does not restrict himself to exploring the emotional concomitants of egoism. His concern is equally engaged by the thought process animated by egocentricity. Using Sir Willoughby and Laetitia (in separate passages) as his models, Meredith takes on the collective ego-centered perspective and exposes the habits of mind to which it is conducive.

The dark power egoism exerts colours reality for Willoughby and Laetitia, and, Meredith insists, is the motivating (causal) factor in our rejection of reality. Of Willoughby the narrator says, "His enemy was the world" but shifts in mid-sentence from explaining his character to articulating every egoist's perception: "His enemy was the world, which confounds us in a lump" (p. 21). Willoughby's experience is shared, not through the novelist's mode of expression but through the collective or communal voice: "The pleasure of the world is to bowl down our soldierly letter I; to encroach on our identity, soil our niceness. To begin to think is the beginning of

disgust of the world" (p. 21). The wish to have an inviolate "identity," unique, separate, private is an attribute of egoism. Meredith's style here is enriched by the irony of "us" and "our."

Egoism is as common as dirt. We all share the same desire. The cognition ("to begin to think") that each of us is a mixture of things influenced by external reality outrages that desire. Laetitia, too, wants to evade the shadow of reality encroaching on her sense of self. The narrator, in explaining Laetitia's retreat into fantasy, looks at her motives from a general perspective.

> Strange eclipse, when the hue of truth comes shadowing over our bright ideal planet. It will not seem the planet's fault, but truth's. Reality is the offender; delusion our treasure that we are robbed of. Then begins with us the term of wilful delusion, and its necessary accompaniment of the disgust of reality. (P. 35)

While we understand the mental conduct of the characters because we share their responses, the use of the introspective mode achieves more than mere explanation. Because the psychological manoeuvres have been articulated we receive a double impression. We are invited to recognize our own impulses in the disturbed psychological processes, but we are also obliged to bring reason to bear upon that recognition, precisely because the patterns have been externalized and are thus vulnerable to analysis. The negativity of the former is undermined by the hopefulness offered by the latter. (If we can recognize "wilful delusion" then we can overcome it.)

Meredith's intention is to "address the mind"[13] with the richness and clarity of the comic vision as it confronts sentimentality and unreason.[14] His art aims at developing a community of "shared perspective and faith"[15] that comes with appreciating the actual world; and the loss of the "treasure" of our uniqueness is the gift his narrative method offers.

Meredith's presentation of character (i.e., the novelistic mode) is congruent with his rendering of the dynamics of social egoism. He mocks his characters' inability to see themselves in a detached comic light, the utter seriousness with which they treat their emotions, and ridicules the literary formulae that support a romantic conception of self.

Willoughby, Clara, and DeCraye enthusiastically indulge their impulse to create fantasies in which their desired self-image is allowed full play. Clara sees herself "out of prison" and wonders what Vernon would think of her actions:

> One day in the Alps they might meet, a middle-aged couple, he famous, she regretful only to have fallen below his lofty standard. "For, Mr. Whitford," says she, very earnestly, "I did wish at that time, believe me or not, to merit your approbation." The brows of the phantom Vernon whom she conjured up were stern, as she had seen them yesterday in the library . . . she gave herself a chiding for thinking of him. (p. 297)

De Craye, too, constructs images of Clara's future:

> The idea drew him to picture her doatingly in her young matronly bloom ten years after marriage: without a touch of age, matronly wise, womanly sweet: perhaps with a couple of little ones to love, never having

known the love of a man.

. . . . . .

For a pacification he had to reconsider that she was as yet only nineteen and unmarried. (p. 259)

Reality intrudes on the imaginings of Clara and DeCraye: the one unselfconsciously dismisses the real insight offered by her thoughts, the other uses his as a lever for gratification and begins to plot how he can achieve his goal. The narrative tone in each passage is quietly ironic. Clara is "very" earnest, DeCraye is "doating;" neither is treated to the extravagant metaphors by which Meredith often signals his ironic intent. Clara's innocent and real caring for Vernon makes her fantasy touching. Vernon is real to her and the natural honesty of her emotions will not allow her to distort him into a fantastic caricature. DeCraye, on the other hand, is revealed more fully as a "Willoughby Butterfly" by the paucity and triviality of his imagination as we see in the repetitions of "Matronly bloom," "matronly wise," "unloved matron," "little ones," or the cliché, "never having known the love of a man." The stunted emotional life of DeCraye has been made clear earlier. His passion, when it goes beyond that of the hunter for his prey, can offer little nourishment for his imagination, and his reason can not extricate him from the "morass" of his fancy, but is useful only in the service of his schemes.

The narrative stance functions subtly in these passages. A close rendering of the characters' mental

processes and strict attention to their language are presented to the reader as embodiments of wish, self-deception and egoism.

Willoughby, of course, lives in a constant battle between his imaginative constructs and the intrusions of reality. The predominance and nature of the fantasy in Willoughby's thought is so lurid and intense as to suggest a pathological struggle. The congruence between the metaphors that Willoughby uses and those of the narrator indicate the intrepidity of Meredith's excursion into Willoughby's and his own psyches. Meredith, however, can see Willoughby and himself and laugh. Willoughby has no distance from the power of his images, no willingness to acknowledge his overwhelming vulnerability and thus no ability to laugh.

The narrator provides us with images of Willoughby's fear as he contends with the idea that he may be losing Clara: "Ten thousand furies thickened about him at a thought of her lying by the roadside without his having crushed all bloom and odour out of her" (p. 270). Willoughby's thoughts and suppositions are vivid and sensuous, specific and fluid. His conjured scenarios, however, are "in a style not unfamiliar." Meredith, here, shows us both Willoughby's reliance on popular literature and the foolish dangerousness of it. The images Willoughby creates are given form by bad novels, and Meredith's portrayal of the fantasy mocks both the egoist and the

romances.

> As thus, in a style not unfamiliar:
> "And was it my fault, my poor girl? Am I to blame that you have passed a lonely unloved youth?"
> "No, Willoughby; the irreparable error was mine the blame is mine, mine only."
> "Clara!"
> "Willoughby!"
> "Clara! one--one only--one last--one holy kiss!"
> "If these poor lips, that once were sweet to you . . ."
> The kiss, to continue the language of the imaginative composition of his time, favourite readings in which had inspired Sir Willoughby with a colloquy so pathetic, was imprinted.
> . . . . . .
> [the kiss] satisfactorily settled her business, and left her "enshrined in memory, a divine recollection, to him" as his popular romances would say, and have said for years. (pp. 270-71)

Meredith's dry and wry comments on the source, quality and conventionality of "popular romances," and the comic earnestness of Willoughby's absorbtion of their style and content mocks the self-serving and ultimately self-defeating indulgence they inspire. "Unhappily" Willoughby is reminded of the "breathing Clara" which contrasts so strongly with the fantasy Clara that his torments are exacerbated.

Meredith offers a contrasting view of and approach to fantasy through the very sensible Vernon Whitford. The narrator's voice and Vernon's are in collusion on one level, while Meredith plays with Vernon, who we are aware, is in love with Clara, on another. Vernon's vision of Clara Middleton bending over him as he sleeps "interwound with reality alarmingly, . . . he jumped to his feet . . . attacked the dreaming earth with tremendous long strides, that his blood might be lively at the throne of under-

standing." Vernon does battle with his "vision" though he appreciates that "it is the golden key of all the possible . . . it illumines, enriches and softens real things;" however, "to desire it in preference to the simple fact is damning proof of enervation" (pp. 136-37).

Meredith's approval of Vernon's attitude is clear: "Such was Vernon's winding up of his brief drama of fantasy. He was aware of the fantastical element in him and soon had it under. Which of us who is of any worth is without it?" (p. 137). That Vernon has little vanity suggests the symbiotic relationship of fantasy and pride, but passion too has a part to play in the imagination. For Vernon, at this point, "passion was quiet" (p. 137) so he is able to walk off the "mental fen-mist."

Vernon's active desire to rely on reality, the "simple fact," and to exercise his reason over his passion is approved by Meredith. Vernon's exertions against the egocentricism that fantasy may succour are validated by the narrative tone, for Meredith's laughter is gentle rather than dissecting. Meredith implies that the irony of Vernon and Clara keeping their growing love from themselves and each other is a comedy based on honour. The comic difficulties engendered by modesty and humility reveal the characters' worth, and may be enjoyed warmly.

Meredith's treatment of character, like his approach to the reader, or to the popular novel is designed to "teach the world what ails it."[16] The comic spirit

moves through the prose as it crosses generic boundaries infusing the novel with reason and honesty. The reconciliation of superficially incongruent modes of experience is achieved with the concordance of disparate modes of expression. With his belief that egoism is at the center of individual and social reality (it is the "Book of Earth" we remember) his faith that the comic spirit chastises those who violate "laws that bind them in consideration to one another" unifies Meredith's sense of the human condition and binds together the "something strangely mixed" that the novel is.

CHAPTER IV

JAMES'S BALANCE OF AFFECTIVE MEANS AND LITERARY IMPULSE IN THE GOLDEN BOWL

This thesis contends that narrative voice is a principle of composition. James's insistence on the importance of the central intelligence from which the novel as organism grows, and which is integral to the particular and overall experience of it, supports that contention. Contrary to the drift of much James criticism, which treats his novels as though the narrator had disappeared into the role of mirroring functionary leaving the characters unmediated, naked, before the eyes of the reader, a close examination of The Golden Bowl reveals a narrator more subtle, but no less active and flexible than that found in Tom Jones or The Egoist. Of the narrator's part in The Golden Bowl James says, "the manner in which it betrays itself may be one of the liveliest sources of amusement" (Preface, p. v).

On the crudest level of exploration we find, of course, that James's narrator does reflect or record the perceptions, thoughts and feelings of the characters, but this is only a small part of the role James has it play. It "betrays itself" not merely as it provides language for

the unarticulated stirrings of the characters, not only through the selection and ordering of their experiences, but also through (as James asserts) the "manner" in which it does so. James's style (or manner) is typified by the tension between the presentation of the particular individuality of a character and the apparent uniformity of narrative language. The narrative voice sustains a consistent rhythm of its own while accurately reflecting the inner life of the characters. Furthermore, the narrator presents himself as consciously attentive to his task in ways that invite the reader to conform to his perspective. Our recognition of the characters' willingness to respond to the texture of their lives is based on the narrator's way of presenting interior monologue, reported and direct speech, and an imagistic portrayal of emotional context. The status James gives to the various modes of expression is, however, not static. The narrator's shifting presence reveals the variousness of his position and presents an unequivocal reliance on his perspective. The narrative stance both encourages the reader to become conscious of the process of narration, and resists the reader's impulse to model his judgement on that which appears to be the narrator's attitude. The complexity of narrative manner thus requires the reader to take upon himself the responsibility of self-conscious judgement with a full appreciation of the difficulty of an articulation that integrates sympathy with moral

sensibility.

James's narrator uses patterns of expression and movement that indicate a consciousness of his own powers, and a willingness to articulate his position. In the first few pages of The Golden Bowl the narrator signals his presence (and our own) in the Prince's life: "It was not indeed to either of those places that the grounds of his predilection, after all sufficiently vague, had, at the moment we are concerned with him, guided his steps" (I,3). Our interest is assumed to be one with the narrator's as he describes, explains, and focuses upon the Prince. We, the narrator and the reader, are not merely watching the Prince, or even merely reading his mind. We are "concerned with him," which implies a feeling interest, and affective engagement. Our sense of being in relation to Amerigo is extended as he fulfills the requirements of the time and as the narrator gives implicit approval to his emotional responsiveness: "There was nothing to do as yet, further, but feel what one had done, and our personage felt it while he aimlessly wandered" (I,5). The narrator does not limit himself to explaining or describing the Prince, or to implying our relation to him. He interjects descriptions of the activity narration involves, for example, "the occasion of which we thus represent him as catching the echoes from his own thought" (I,11) and, later, indicates a particular response that his role allows, "He had an idea--which may amuse his historian" (I,17). The narrator

defines, ("that gravity the oppression of which I began by recording" [I,18]), reiterates, ("But what meanwhile marked his crisis, as I have said" [I,19]), and speculates ("The spectator of whom they would thus well have been worthy might have read meanings of his own into the intensity of their communion--or indeed, even without meanings, have found his account, aesthetically in some gratified play of our modern sense of type, so scantly to be distinguished from our modern sense of beauty" [I,33].). These explicit "intrusions" in which the narrator makes his presence, his function, and his play of mind apparent invite the reader to develop various responses to the narrator, and to share his perspective. The peculiar latitude that James gives his narrator allows him the freedom to follow a character's line of thought but requires that he hold the thread of the story being told. He indicates his affection and sympathy for the Prince, but can attain the distance of an "amused historian." He must "record" and "represent," but implies that he is able to "read meanings of his own" into a situation and exercise the "play" of a modern sensibility (and suggests that any "worthy" spectator could do the same). With these uses of the narrator James induces the reader to collaborate with the impulse to be affective. This affective prompting is an intellectual relationship, too, in that the reader has the emotional invitations presented to him in a manner that evokes recognition of the narrator's critical and thoughtful

distance from the character.

These initial remarks about the embodied narrator lead to an account of the tasks James himself states are the responsibility of the narrator, and require an exploration of the narrator's characteristic modes of expression and the implications inherent in them.

The task James sets his narrator, "the process and effect of representation," moves "toward the point of view that . . . will give [him] the most instead of the least to answer for" (Preface, p. vi). The two aspects of representation, process and effect, may be examined in detail through an analysis of the narrator's typical way of thinking about the characters. The analysis must be comparative for James maintains a dual conception of character. The individuality of Maggie, the Prince, Adam is apparent through the transparency of James's language, but simultaneously the narrative voice maintains its own idiom. James achieves consistent duality by a peculiar pattern of expression that envelops the character, yet reveals him.

The narrator's rendering of the Prince as he deliberates upon the mysterious "obscure" motives of his American friends, Mrs. Assingham and the Ververs, is an example of this dual mode of presentation. Amerigo sees their motives as "a dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals, yet of the colour of milk or of snow" (I,22). The Prince abandons his consideration of the

surprises that might be sheltered behind the "great white curtain" and concerns himself with other measurements:

> Shocks, however, from these quite different depths, were not what he saw reason to apprehend; what he rather seemed to himself not yet to have measured was something that, seeking a name for it, he would have called the quality of confidence reposed in him. He had stood still, at many a moment of the previous month, with the thought, freshly determined or renewed, of the general expectation--to define it roughly--of which he was the subject. What was singular was that it seemed not so much an expectation of anything in particular as a large bland blank assumption of merits almost beyond notation, of essential quality and value. It was as if he had been some old embossed coin . . . of which the "worth" in mere modern change, sovereigns and half crowns, would be great enough, but as to which, since there were finer ways of using it, such taking to pieces was superfluous. That was the image for the security in which it was open to him to rest; . . . all that <u>was</u> before him was that he was invested with attributes. (I,23)

The narrator here (the passage is, I believe, typical) delineates that which is vague in the Prince's thought while making it precise in his own. The "quality of confidence reposed in him" is what the Prince "would have called" the sensation of which he was conscious; the narrator defines "roughly" as the "general expectation" the sense the Prince has of the Ververs' approach to him. These definitions are not articulated in the Prince's mind. What he does have is an image. The narrator describes it for us, "It was as if he had been some old embossed coin," without introducing it as the Prince's own. For the reader this produces the unbroken effect of abstract thought concretized. Only after the particularities of the image have been developed do we learn that the Prince,

himself, has constructed it. The similar phrasings, "It was as if," or "That was the image" constitute a kind of replay and emphasis of the amorphous thoughts the Prince has. We learn, moreover, that the Prince is not seeking a "name" for his sensation but a three-dimensional configuration which allows rather than restricts further exploration of the kind that interests him most. It is here that the consistency of James's exposition diverges from the consistency of Amerigo's image making.[1] The open abstractions provided by the narrator's articulation are reduced and narrowed by the fiscal images that Amerigo "rests" on: "Value" and "essential quality" become a number of "sovereigns and half crowns," and the product of the Prince's "measure" is at its highest point when his imagination leads him to the greatest number: "Who but a billionaire could say what was fair exchange for a billion?" (I,24). The potential implied by the narrator's open explorations of the Prince's vague sense of a "quality of confidence" is channeled into a commercial enterprise, and while the narrator makes neither a response to the Prince's question nor a comment upon the kind of image the Prince uses, the reader is left with a sense that much more is at stake than even Amerigo's billion dollar figure can encompass. In fact, the absence of narrative comment allows the smooth flow of the language to high-light the gap between the Prince's view of his situation and the detachment from it that the narrator maintains.

When we compare this presentation of Amerigo's habit of mind with Maggie's as she, too, begins to take the measure of a consciousness that will no longer stay submerged, we find marked similarities and equally significant differences in narrative method.

> It wasn't till many days had passed that the Princess began to accept the idea of having done, a little, something that she was not always doing, or indeed that of having listened to any inward voice that spoke in a new tone. Yet these instinctive postponements of reflexion were the fruit, positively, of recognitions and perceptions already active; of the sense above all that she had made at a particular hour, made by the mere touch of her hand, a difference in the situation so long present to her as practically unattackable. This situation has been occupying for months and months the very centre of the garden of her life but it had reared itself there like some strange tall tower of ivory . . . She had walked round and round it--that was what she felt . . . but never quite making out as yet where she might have entered had she wished.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If this image, however, may represent our young woman's consciousness of a recent change in her life--a change now but a few days old--it must at the same time be observed that she both sought and found in renewed circulation, as I have called it, a measure of relief from having perhaps to answer for what she had done. The pagoda in her blooming garden figured the arrangement--how otherwise was it to be named?--by which, so strikingly she had been able to marry without breaking, as she liked to put it, with her past. (II,3-5)

This passage, like the former, begins with the character's moment of conscious deliberation. Indeed, both passages use abstractions clarified by image, then rely on the image to refine and delimit the thought; both indicate the necessity of definition, though neither the Prince nor Maggie forms the original definition, and each character arrives at a clear perception of his own thought.

The distinctions between the two passages are not to be found in the narrator's presentation but in the individual differences between the Prince and Maggie. The prince's thought is grounded in choice, selection and reason. He decides to "apprehend" something "not yet measured." The Prince has ready access to "depths" that he could name if he desired; and the name the Prince would have given his perception ("Quality of confidence") and the "singularity" of the confidence or "expectation" is remarked as though the narrator and the Prince have but one voice. The Prince's language of abstract thought is not dissimiliar from the narrator's. Maggie, on the other hand, resists "idea." The first sentence reveals her hesitance and timidity. Maggie's reluctance to confront her experience consciously is evident in the way the narrator describes the process of her thoughts. The lingering first phrase ("It wasn't until many days had passed"), which defers the reader's grasp of what has happened, parallels Maggie's delay. The interruption of the main clause, "The Princess began to accept the idea of having done, a little, something that she was not always doing," with the parenthetical "a little" emphasizes how modestly she sees her action. And, as the activity is reduced from doing to attending, the "or indeed" indicates that the "idea" of merely "having listened" is difficult for her to accept. This first sentence of Volume II makes James's interest very clear. Maggie's

experience of her experience is much more important than the event itself. We do not learn what the precise stimulus was until fifteen pages later as Maggie circles nearer and nearer her own perception of the Prince as "visibly uncertain" (II,15) in the face of her unusual presence at Portland Place. The reader's ignorance of the events of the "particular hour" forces him to anticipate knowledge, while engaging him in the process of Maggie's evolving acceptance of consciousness.

The narrator's confident assertion, "Yet these instinctive postponements of reflexion were the fruit, positively, of recognitions and perceptions already active," indicates a sympathetic apprehension of Maggie's method of approach in "Yet," a belief in the ripening of her mind, and an appreciation of the "instinct" of self-preservation that makes Maggie both hesitate to reflect and insist that she do so. It is interesting to note that the Prince bases the exploration of "recognitions and perceptions" on "reason" while Maggie's caution is "instinctive." Much is made of the Prince's instinct bred by generations of high refinement. He relies on it to "protect" him, to provide him with knowledge.[2] This easy and complacent reliance on instinct must be contrasted with Maggie's resistance to her "instinctive postponements of reflexion." She is tentative, but tenacious in her "sense" that something has changed. The narrator's use of

simile, the "situation . . . like some strange tall tower of ivory," becomes concrete in Maggie's experience: "She had walked round and round it--that was what she felt," but there is no clear indication that Maggie herself shapes the image. The narrator's own tentative note, "If this image, however, may represent our young woman's consciousness of a recent change in her life," and his self-conscious comment on his description, "circulation, as I have called it" are measures of the degree to which his hand is shaping for the reader the tangible impact that Maggie's thoughts and feelings are having upon her. This gap between Maggie's sensation and her power to articulate is emphasized by the two pointed references to her language. The question, "how otherwise was it to be named?" (i.e., "the arrangement"), echoes Maggie's earlier sense of "the situation." Its particulars are not yet apparent to her and we must acknowledge that the narrator has proven himself capable of "naming" it otherwise. Even more direct is the reference to Maggie's use of the cliché, "without breaking, as she liked to put it, with her past." The narrative voice interupts Maggie's phrasing, emphasizes its habitual usage, and increases our sense of the frame out of which Maggie is beginning to break.

The passage describes Maggie hovering around her awareness. Her impulses are paralleled by the narrative movement which presents a statement then backs away and

reflects upon it from a different angle. We learn that she hesitates, "Yet" her hesitation is positive; we acknowledge a "consciousness of change," but "it must at the same time be observed" that she retreats in "renewed circulation" from the possible consequences of consciousness. The reader thus oscillates with Maggie through the manipulation of narrative perspective.

Through the comparison of these passages the reader may recognize the multiple levels of freedom and restraint with which James affects his narrator. The similarities of technique are striking. The differences revealed in the characters are no less so. The "process and effect of representation" make extraordinary demands on the narrator who achieves the utmost clarity with the least sacrifice of complexity.

Richard Ohman states "Prose builds on the emotional force of coming to know, of pinning down part of what has previously been formless and resolving the tensions which exist between the human organism and unstructured experience,"[3] and more emphatically, "The writer must recreate in prose the emotional concomitants of his thinking."[4] The "emotional force of coming to know" that the Prince, Maggie, and Mrs. Assingham must contend with gives us access to James's intention. It is through the narrative voice that James recreates the "emotional concomitants of his thinking" for the narrator provides a quality of consistency in his manner that serves as a

backdrop for the resolution of tensions that the characters and reader must confront. Simultaneously the narrator's presentation reflects the unruffled surface of the social arrangement in which Maggie, the Prince, Adam, and Charlotte find themselves. That is, the perfect serenity of social appearance is affirmed by James's celebration of the serenity of narrative manner. But just as the surface of life at Fawns and in London has depths and shades of intellectual and emotional agitation so does the evenness of narrative manner reveal intricacies of James's "emotional stance."[5]

It is, I believe, in the tension between the kinds of deliberateness that the narrator displays that the tension between surface and depth of social and narrative ambience acquires significance. Our efforts, like those of character and narrator, must rely on the gracious and polished social and narrative finish, while allowing their inner or submerged processes to direct our attention to the kind of responsibility James requires of his reader. It is not enough, in other words, that James's story-teller or his tale have the "most to answer for"; his reader, too, must accept the burden of self-consciousness, and James's style or manner (process and effect) of representation ensures that "coming to know" is in no way deceptively simple.

The narrator exercises, as was noted above, a flexible sense of his own role. In order to determine the

ways in which James provokes the reader to shape for himself an appropriate response we must expand our sense of narrative control, with a view, always, to the gaps left for us by the narrative movement. This exploration requires that we not only recognize at least some of the categories of narrative manner through which James enjoys the verbal decorum or surface of presentation, but also that we see how James both sustains and undermines those categories (which requires the deduction of ironic perspective), and finally that we realize how this exploration reaches an emotional and intellectual resolution which parallels that achieved by the novel.

James's mild playfulness, the different levels of interest and engagement that his language allows, may be seen in the style that characterizes his introduction to Adam Verver.

> Adam Verver, at Fawns, that autumn Sunday, might have been observed to open the door of the billiard-room with a certain freedom--might have been observed, that is, had there been a spectator in the field. The justification of the push he had applied, however, and of the push equally sharp that, to shut himself in, he again applied--the ground of this energy was precisely that he might here, however briefly, find himself alone, alone with the handful of letters, newspapers and other unopened missives, to which, during and since breakfast, he had lacked opportunity to give an eye. The vast square clean apartment was empty, and its large clear windows looked out into spaces of terrace and garden of park and woodland and artificial lake, of richly condensed horizon, all dark blue upland and church towered village and strong cloud-shadow, which were, together, a thing to create to the sense, with every one else at church, of one's having the world to one's self. We share this world, none the less, for the hour, with Mr. Verver; the very fact of his striking, as he would have said, for

> solitude, the fact of his quiet flight, almost on tiptoe, through tortuous corridors, investing him with an interest that makes our attention--tender indeed almost to compassion--qualify his achieved isolation. (I,125)

The narrative self-consciousness establishes a peculiar duality here: first the narrator teases the reader with his insistence that we maintain a sense both of the emphatic aloneness of Adam Verver (there is no "spectator in the field") and of the presence of the authorial eye. The privileged view of the narrator (and the reader) is pointed to, and the two levels of reality, the life lived in the novel, and the life lived by the reader are both called into play. This paradoxical position established, the narrator is free "none the less" to assert another level of self-consciousness. Despite Adam's "sense . . . of having the world to one's self," we share this "world" with him, and increasing the irony of Adam's position, we intrude upon his privacy precisely because his desire for solitude "invest[s] him with an interest." The narrator's solicitous "attention--tender almost to compassion" is justifying almost to apology. Adam's "achieved isolation" must be seen as ironic comment in that our presence is so much an issue. Simultaneously the distance achieved by the reminders of the gap in realities between Adam Verver and the observers is undercut by the closeness the narrator claims (and which he substantiates by a congruity of language: "Striking, as he would have said, for solitude"). We see the narrator's

"tender, almost to compassion" as an effort to bring us closer to the character--but not quite so close as the narrator's appraisal of "attention" would suggest. James sets the lightly ironic tone in the first sentence; the last is coloured by it. The movement from no spectator to one who exhibits a tenderness that is not quite compassion, suggests too great a contrast for the attitude to be taken at face value. The function, then, of the narrator's self-consciousness is to induce a self-consciousness on the reader's part that makes him, on the one hand, an ally of the narrator's perspective, while, on the other, undermines it as a totally reliable model on which to base a response.

Within the frame that the narrator's overt presence creates, the manner of description plays upon what is being described in a way that makes the reader experience in the reading what Adam Verver experiences in the living. The second sentence (describing the "justification" of the "certain freedom" with which Adam opens and closes the door, and the motives of these actions) is made up of a series of circumambulatory pauses and short phrases. The combination of the length of the sentence and the halting effect of the phrases, the repetitions ("of the push"/"of the push"; "he had applied"/"he again applied"; "alone"/"alone") and duration ("briefly," "during," "since") make the later comment about "tortuous corridors" alive for the reader. Adam Verver on tiptoe through the

tortuous corridors of that second sentence is a kind of comic shuffle for both Adam and the reader.

The painful achievement of solitude for Adam and the earned appreciation of the reader provide both with the spacious clarity described in, and manifested by, the third sentence: "The vast square clean apartment was empty, and its large clear windows looked out into spaces of terrace and garden." The gracious expansiveness of the sentence structure, the relative infrequency of breaks, the direct relation between subject and verb contrast with the constricted irritation of the previous sentence.[6] We find James lingering, savouring the easy relief that Adam feels as he looks around him.

This passage demonstrates various kinds of deliberateness. The narrator is self-consciously ironic about his own role, forcing us to be alert to his vagaries, and our own position. Description is adapted to the experienced world of the character, or reshapes the experience in terms of its explicit interest to the reader, and in so doing reminds the reader that he has an interest distinct from that of the character. The smooth rendering of details of time, place, objects, and scenes work in counterpoint to the intangibles and abstractions[7] that create an ironic overbalance with the concrete detail (e.g., "justification" has moral, ethical, and legal connotations which suggests exaggerated concern for how a door is closed). The irony here is gentle. We share

Adam's frustration and relief, but do so with a sense of detachment that, from the first sentence, cannot be forgotten.

The gentle treatment that Adam receives is recognizable in the tone and direction of the irony James uses. The narrator's self-conscious playfulness about his presence and James's teasing about his emotional response to Adam dispose us to see him kindly.

James's manner of presenting the Prince and Charlotte at the moment of their greatest satisfaction reveals another, considerably wider, ironic gap between the smooth surface of verbal decorum and the attitude implied.

In the paragraph beginning with Lady Castledean's dream of Mr. Blint, the Prince realizes that Charlotte had "wonderfully guessed" (I,356) his wish for a "still greater beauty" (I,346). As the narrator has been very near Amerigo's thoughts ("The larger step had been . . . intensely in his own mind") the detachment present in the first part of the passage has an ambiguous quality. Ostensibly he is presenting us with the Prince's play of mind, but the manner of presentation suggests that the narrator himself is colouring the statement, without the direct reference to self that alerted us in the previous passage.

> . . . They had these identities of impulse--they had had them repeatedly before; and if such unarranged but unerring encounters gave the measure of the degree

> in which people were, in the common phrase, meant for each other, no union in the world had ever been more sweetened with rightness. What in fact most often happened was that her rightness went, as who should say, even further than his own; they were conscious of the same necessity at the same moment, only it was she who as a general thing most clearly saw her way to it. Something in her long look at him now out of the old grey window, something in the very poise of her hat, the colour of her necktie, the prolonged stillness of her smile, touched into sudden light for him all the wealth of the fact that he could count on her. He had his hand there, to pluck it, the open bloom of the day; but what did the bright minute mean but that her answering hand was already intelligently out? So therefore while the minute lasted it passed between them that their cup was full; which cup their very eyes, holding it fast, carried and steadied and began, as they tasted it, to praise. He broke however after a moment the silence.
>
> "It only wants a moon, a mandolin and a little danger to be a serenade." (I,356-57)

The distancing and generalizing perspective of the first two sentences gives the reader a background from which to interpret the resonance of felicity of which the present circumstance is a high instance. The shift to the immediate brings us into the Prince's experience and celebrates the fullness of the moment that he shares with Charlotte. The propriety of presentation is sustained by the narrator's tactful recounting, explaining, and detailing of the situation, its history and its vividness. But the manner of expression works against its matter. The reader is first alerted to the possibility of an ironic mask by the presence of three rhetorical questions.[8] The first, "if such . . . encounters gave the measure," and the second, "as who should say" are not fixed in conventional rhetorical phrasings, but rather function as questions.

With the third, "what did the bright minute mean but that her . . . hand was already . . . out?" they evoke questions in the reader: do such "encounters," such "identities of impulse," indicate that people are "meant for each other"?; who is in a position to say how far Charlotte's "rightness" could go?; and, what other meanings does the "bright minute" carry?

James does not answer these questions for us, but he does provide indicators of his own attitude. The intrusion of "in the common phrase" has several levels of ironic significance. In the first place, the Prince and Charlotte have exquisite notions about their relationship (we remember the Prince: "'It's sacred,' he said at last. 'It's sacred,' she breathed back to him" [I,312]). By juxtaposing a view of the "sweet rightness" of their liaison with the "common phrase," "meant for each other," James invites us to wonder what the difference is. This justaposition evokes the collusion between Amerigo and Charlotte and Mrs. Castledean and Mr. Blint, challenges their own image of their "union," and mocks the assumption held in the "common" mind that rightness, meaningfulness, and value in human relations are easily achieved.

This point is further emphasized in the second question. Amerigo and Charlotte have "identities of impulse" that, superficially, indicate the value of their affair. The fact that the impulse is not quite identical is pointed to by the question interrupting the breadth of

Charlotte's "rightness": "her rightness went, as who should say, even further than his own." If the reader has begun to question the first premise, the repetition of "rightness," stated and implied, takes on ironic tones of its own, while the enigmatic question serves a rhetorical and an immediately reflective function.

The third question, "but what did the bright minute mean but that her answering hand was already intelligently out?", has an apparent association with the "open bloom of the day" for which the Prince has his hand out. The immediately preceding image, however, evokes other connotations. Amerigo is aware of "all the wealth of the fact that he could count on her." The monetary imagery so frequently seen in relation to the Prince works against him here. The Prince sees the profit he accrues from Charlotte. James does not specify what Charlotte herself is reaching for; he arrests us with the question, and thus provokes a sense of ambiguity. Not only is the meaning of the "bright minute" called into the arena of irony, but also the object for which Charlotte's hand is "intelligently out" is open to doubt.

The rhetorical questions are only one aspect of the ways in which James involves his reader in critical appraisal. His use of repetition and parallels also invites the reader's appraisal. The building, for example, of expectation in the reader as the Prince becomes aware of the "something" in Charlotte's "long look," "the very poise

of her hat, the colour of her necktie," leads to a deliberate weight, a focus upon the fiscal image it produces and thus makes us particularly conscious of it. In a different way the narrative manner undermines the rhapsodic paralleling of phrases about "the cup." Besides the echo of the "golden bowl" in the "cup" which is the image of their flawed relationship, the way in which they see their relations is mocked. The image is all theirs: "it passed between them that their cup was full." The clichéd vision is presented in a tone of "mock politeness" which is promptly deflated by the vulgarity of "which cup their very eyes." The emphasis of "which," the repetition of "cup," and the crude modifier "very" make the elaboration of the romantic image an ironic comment upon Amerigo's and Charlotte's way of seeing. The Prince here is treated with a dual irony. He sees the heavy romanticism and plays with it: "'It wants only a moon, a mandolin and a little danger." James here is inviting further questions. We appreciate the Prince's sensitivity to the atmosphere of the moment, yet we must be critical of his self-indulgence in it, of which he is blatantly unaware; he does not recognize the "danger" already present in the "open bloom of the day" and, in fact, through the "serenade" image, turns day into night.

This exploration, then, reveals other aspects of the tension between the surface of James's prose and the undercurrents of intention that may be inferred from the

manner of presentation. The narrator makes no overt criticism of Amerigo and Charlotte in this passage, yet the reader is induced to challenge the authenticity of their "union." The hints that James offers us not only reveal his intention, but shape our experience of the characters. Unlike our sharing of Adam's perspective, which places us in sympathy with him (though we are prevented from identifying with him, or with the narrator) the distancing required here alienates us from the characters' perspective, and, as the narrator has made no presentation of his own personal view, we are, with the help of the language, on our own.

The last passage I will examine uses some of the same verbal patterns described above, but with different effects. The representation of Maggie that James gives us relies less on linguistic irony and more upon a cumulative revelation that parallels her gradual but irresistible willingness to know everything there is to know about her situation. Our first view of Maggie showed that the narrator functions in part to articulate her undefined experience. In this later passage the narrator is still in evidence. However, his role in relation to Maggie is more clearly expository of those things that she herself realizes. Maggie's consciousness, the impact of the situation upon it, and the situation as the narrator sees it are treated to more subtle renderings than we have yet encountered. James presents Maggie musing over the

relations between her father and his wife, and in the process the reader is again confronted with the necessity of determining from whose perspective her thoughts are presented--and even whether what we are given is in fact Maggie's perception or the narrator's privileged view. And again, James's prediction that the discovery of how the narrator betrays himself offers the "liveliest source of amusement" is found to be true, not only for its own sake, but also for what it offers us in our attempts to infer James's intentions.

In this passage Maggie has been wondering if the effect of Charlotte's enthusiastic adoption of Adam's interest in his treasures is good for her father.

> . . . Maggie, wonderfully, in the summer days, felt it forced upon her that that was one way, after all, of being a genial wife; and it was never so much forced upon her as at these odd moments of her encountering the sposi, as Amerigo called them, under the coved ceilings of Fawns while, so together yet at the same time so separate, they were making their daily round. Charlotte hung behind with emphasized attention; she stopped when her husband stopped, but at the distance of a case or two, or of whatever other succession of objects; and the likeness of their connexion would n't have been wrongly figured if he had been thought of as holding in one of his pocketed hands the end of a long silken halter looped round her beautiful neck. He did n't twitch it, yet it was there; he did n't drag her, but she came; and those betrayals which I have described the Princess as finding irresistible in him were two or three mute facial intimations which his wife's presence did n't prevent his addressing his daughter--nor prevent his daughter, as she passed, it was doubtless to be added, from flushing a little at the receipt of. They amounted perhaps only to a wordless, wordless smile, but the smile was the soft shake of the twisted silken rope, and Maggie's translation of it, held in her breast till she got well away, came out only, as if it might have been overheard, when some door was closed behind her. "Yes, you see--I lead her now by the neck, . . ." (II,287)

Though James sets Maggie's feelings in the general context of "summer days," the understanding "forced upon her" is most emphatic in "these odd moments." The distinction between the blur of time that "summer days" suggests, and the specific recognition achieved in "these odd moments" creates a tension between the recurring events and the realization of their significance that takes place.

Maggie's concern for her father leads her to see that in a general way Charlotte's actions are "one way . . . of being a genial wife." But as Maggie watches them making their "daily round" she realizes first that they were "so together yet at the same time so separate." The personal consciousness of the observer disappears at this point and a stark portrayal is given: "Charlotte hung behind with emphasized attention; she stopped when her husband stopped." Simultaneously, the "tossed-off" quality of "or whatever" indicates that what is important is not the particular setting but the repeated pattern of actions.

The impression of concrete action dominates this passage. Unlike James's usual penchant for passive, abstract verb forms, the verbs here, "hung," "stopped" (repeated twice), "twitch," "drag," "came," "described," "prevent" (also repeated), "shake," "held," and "lead," create a sense of the definitive and aggressive movement that is taking place. The temporal ambiguity of the words, that is, the question of whether they are a series of repeated actions or a particular set of events, intensifies their

violent quality. This tension (the temporal ambiguity) between the specific event and general occurrence is further exaggerated by references to the time span. Maggie's thoughts take place "in the summer days" which narrows to "these odd moments," in which Adam and Charlotte "were making their daily round." The question of whether the experience is single or multiple may be found in the resolution of perspectives on the scene.

The narrative voice is explicitly present in the formation of the figure, but the tone is self-effacing: "and the likeness of their connexion would n't have been wrongly figured if he had been thought of as holding . . . ." The rhetorical understatement not only paces our meeting with the image, but serves to emphasize its accuracy. Moreover the specific "likeness" applies to an ongoing thought about an ongoing "connexion." That is, the "figure" or insight takes place in a specific moment in time which is then held, "thought," in an enduring way. The grotesque picture of Charlotte leashed is heightened by the slow graceful building of the image: "holding in one of this pocketed hands the end of a long silken halter looped round her beautiful neck." The "thought" coheres with concrete reality, as the image and the actions are juxtaposed: "He did n't twitch it, yet it was there; he did n't drag her, but she came" and the Princess's consciousness of that cohesion causes her to flush in response to her father's "betrayals" of the ugly reality

of their "daily round." Our return, so abruptly, to Maggie's perspective suggests that she "sees" the "likeness of their connexion" and the narrator's judicious comment, "it was doubtless to be added," indicates not only the necessity of accurate and full representation, but also the necessity of ensuring that we realize Maggie holds that image. James continues to emphasize the repetitiveness of the experience both through the vagueness around particulars ("two or three mute facial intimations," "perhaps only . . . a wordless, wordless smile") and the shift in perspectives that suggest they are shared by the narrator and Maggie. The abstractness of "mute facial intimations" and the specific intensity of "wordless, wordless smile" reveal the gap between the rendering of experience which is the narrator's role, and the acceptance of it, which is Maggie's.

The "wordless, wordless smile" becomes increasingly specific as it is first "the soft shake of the twisted silken rope" and then, translated, becomes the words of her father: "Yes, you see--I lead her now by the neck." The transition from experience general in time and general in apprehension to experience specific in both is complete. Movement has been continuous on the general level, while the precise pain of it is fully realized. The generalities in time and incident ("those betrayals," "some door") and the fluctuating ambiguity of perspective increase our sense of the intensity of Maggie's realization and evoke the

enduring tensions at work on the characters and in the prose.

It is Maggie's capacity for sustained endurance, and for incorporating within her own experience the feelings and thoughts of the others that makes the narrator's consistent attention to her in Volume II necessary, possible, and significant. The narrator's field of vision wavers from Maggie, only once, briefly during that section of the novel in which Mrs. Assingham confesses to "an odd despair" of ignorance and loss as she realizes Maggie has gone "beyond" her powers of moral imagination. Again, the contrast with Amerigo is necessary. In Volume I, "The Prince," the narrator focusses on the Prince himself less than two-thirds of the time. This abandonment of him suggests that the Prince's consciousness of his world is unable to provide us with all the relevant information, that he is in a kind of stasis that allows us to leave him, and that other characters' perceptions of him are as valid and useful as his own.

The quickness and inclusiveness of Maggie's perception of herself and her "situation" require the narrator's constant attention. The implication is that if we leave her she may get "beyond" us as well. We must share in the process of her experience in order to appreciate its effect.

These two approaches toward narrative perspective provide the basic structure of The Golden Bowl. With this

simple, almost elementary device, James has given us a way of inferring his intention. We know that for James the most flexible and encompassing mind is the one in which the greatest emotional, intellectual, and moral heights are to be found, and it is that mind which will command the most thorough narrative exposure. The ambiguities, as Dorothea Krook[10] says, are not eliminated, or collapsed into a simple resolution, but through attention to the narrative voice, the reader undergoes the full emotional and intellectual complexity the novel demands, and achieves, with James, the feeling of having had "the most to answer for."

Footnotes

Chapter I

[1] Henry James, Preface to The Tragic Muse [referring to Thackeray's novels] in The Art of the Novel (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 84.

[2] Jane Austen, quoted by Tony Tanner in his introduction to Mansfield Park (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 32.

[3] Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 57-81.

[4] For example Erich Auerback's Mimesis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

[5] For example E. M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[6] For example Ian Watt's The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[7] T. S. Eliot, Four Quartets "East Coker" II, Collected Poems: 1909-1962 (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1963), p. 198.

[8] W. K. Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), p. 28.

[9] Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 24.

[10] Ibid., p. 25.

[11] Ralph Rader, "The Concept of Genre in Eighteenth-Century Studies," in New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Literature, ed. Phillip Harth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 84.

[12] Ibid., p. 84.

[13] Phrased by Ralph Cohen at The University of Alberta's Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference, Oct. 1975.

[14] Scholes and Kellogg, p. 275.

[15] Ibid., p. 275.

[16] Ibid., p. 157.

[17] Ibid., p. 240.

[18] Ibid., p. 241.

[19] Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), pp. 125-27.

[20] Booth, p. 304.

[21] Wimsatt, p. 28.

[22] de Man, p. 29.

[23] Watt, p. 11.

[24] Geoffrey Hartman, Beyond Formalism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 50.

[25] Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, ed. Fredson Bowers, Wesleyan Edition to The Works of Henry Fielding, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). Subsequent references to Tom Jones, inserted in the text, are to this edition.

[26] George Meredith, The Egoist, Memorial Edition, 2 vols. (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1910). Subsequent references to The Egoist, inserted in the text, are to this edition.

[27] Henry James, The Golden Bowl, New York Edition, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922). Subsequent references to The Golden Bowl, inserted in the text, are to this edition.

Chapter III

[1] Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1953), p. 193.

[2] George Meredith, Essay on Comedy (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1897), p. 91.

[3] Ibid., p. 90.

[4] Ibid., p. 82.

[5] Ibid., p. 96.

[6] Ibid., p. 32.

[7] Ibid., p. 26.

[8] Judith Wilt, The Readable People of George Meredith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 75.

[9] Wilt, p. 75.

[10] Meredith, Essay, pp. 25, 87.

[11] J. Hillis Miller, The Form of Victorian Fiction (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 35.

[12] Meredith, Essay. Comedy, Meredith says, is possible only when society has reached a high refinement.

[13] Meredith, Essay, p. 8.

[14] Ibid., p. 63.

[15] Ibid., p. 90.

[16] Ibid., p. 25.

Chapter IV

[1] See I,47 (re Charlotte), 325 (re Adam), 345 (re Charlotte) for further examples.

[2] The Prince says to Charlotte "Ah but one does know. I always do at least--and by instinct. I don't fail. That will always protect me" (I,120).

[3] Richard Ohman, "Prolegomena to the Analysis of Prose Style," Contemporary Essays on Style, ed. Glen Love and Michael Payne (Illinois: Scott Foreman and Co., 1969), p. 189.

[4] Ibid., p. 188.

[5] Ibid., p. 188.

[6] The immediate association of subject and verb in "the apartment was empty" stands in deep contrast to the laborious movement through the twenty-seven words between the subject, "the justification," and the verb, "was," in the previous sentence.

[7] Seymour Chatman, The Later Style of Henry James (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), pp. 4-5.

[8] Geoffrey Leech, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry (London: Longman's 1969), p. 184.

[9] Leech, pp. 176, 178.

[10] Dorothea Krook, The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 324. I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Dorothea Krook's study of James. This book provides the most comprehensive and intelligent criticism of The Golden Bowl that I have read.

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